

# READING T. S. ELIOT READING SPINOZA

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# READING T. S. ELIOT READING SPINOZA

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“[The ordinary man] falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other” – a good reader of T. S. Eliot’s criticism probably knows this famous passage; a good researcher on Eliot’s apprenticeship in philosophy perhaps knows that he *did* actually read Spinoza; and yet, in the current Eliot studies, reading Eliot and reading Spinoza seem to have nothing to do with each other. In this dissertation, I attempt to reconstruct Eliot’s reading of Spinoza as faithfully and comprehensively as possible, by closely analyzing the marginalia in Eliot’s copy of Spinoza’s *Opera*, housed in the Archive Centre of King’s College, Cambridge. At the same time, the Spinozist context for Eliot’s apprenticeship at Harvard and Oxford (with the intermission of “a romantic year” in Paris) is also to be presented, which is, in fact, a glaring absence in the philosophical branch of Eliot studies.

In addition to these positivistic contributions, I also take a theoretical approach so as to demonstrate how illuminative Eliot’s reading of Spinoza can be for understanding the characteristic *style* (or “ethology”) of Eliot’s reading in general (i.e., Theory), by way of extensively analyzing the unpublished as well as published materials of Eliot’s “academic philosophizing” that culminated in his doctoral dissertation on F. H. Bradley. Furthermore, theories of reading are to be provided mainly by the (New) Spinozist tradition, e.g., Deleuzean “double reading” and Althusserian “symptomatic reading”. With these theoretical weapons in hand, I examine the ways in which Eliot’s repression,

or *symptomatic* oversights, of the Ontological question in his “systematic reading” of Spinoza (hence his Theory in general) is dogged by the return of the repressed “affective reading”, while his evasion of the Ontological question leads to an epistemological deadlock over the issue of solipsism, which is only to be resolved, rather violently, by a “leap” at an imagined commonality based on “essential kinship” that Eliot has contrived for himself – in sharp contrast to the idea of an “*inessential* commonality” that Agamben derives from Spinozian “common notions”.

Finally, the political *afterlives* of Eliot’s Theory are problematized through the analysis of several *uncanny* mis/readings, or *appropriations*, of Eliot’s celebrated essay, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”. Those politicized mis/readings by Nishida Kitarō (arguably the greatest philosopher of Imperial Japan) and Ch’oe Chaesŏ (a most prominent “pro-Japanese” intellectual in Colonial Korea) as well as that by the later Eliot himself will, in turn, illuminate the *idea* of Empire and its *logic* that are latent in Eliot’s ostensibly “purely literary” theory of “Tradition”.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Yoshiaki Mihara was born in Tokyo, Japan in 1974. He attended Musashi Junior and Senior High School from 1987 to 1993, during which time he spent a “romantic year” at Eton College (U.K.) from 1991 to 1992. He then entered the University of Tokyo in 1993, earning his B.A. (1997) and M.A. (2000) in English. Having briefly worked as a Research Associate at his alma mater, he left his home country as a Fulbright scholar and joined the doctoral program in English at Cornell University in 2001, where he was admitted to candidacy in 2004. He returned to Japan in 2005 to take up teaching positions at Ochanomizu University (Tokyo) and then at Doshisha University (Kyoto), where he is now an Associate Professor.

For my grandpa,  
Prof. Yoshi'ichirō Hashimoto  
in memoriam  
(1912 - 1995)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I arrived in the United States of America for the first time in my life – several weeks before 9.11, 2001. Born and bred in postwar Japan, I had not imagined that I would ever be living in a nation or empire at war. Those were difficult times for the world and the country in which I had chosen to live as a *metoikos*, albeit a very privileged one. Privileged indeed, for I was entirely free to fully enjoy the intellectual community at Cornell, “far above the busy humming of the bustling town”, while, at the same time, I was fortunate enough to make so many precious friends not only in the seminar rooms up on the hill but also in the anti-war rallies down in the town of Ithaca and in the city of New York. Had I not lived those difficult times *there* with *them*, I would never have known *that* side of “the land of the free”. For that, I am grateful to History’s “cunning passages” and “contrived corridors” that led me to Ithaca, New York, at that particular time.

And yet, there was another turn. It turned out that I had to return to my home country much earlier than I had expected, without knowing how difficult it would be to complete a dissertation and how long it would take. This dissertation is indeed a bittersweet fruit of prolongation and procrastination on my part, and only the abiding support from numerous teachers, friends, and institutions could have brought it to fruition before it got overripe. I would first like to thank my Committee: Profs. Jonathan Culler, Natalie Melas, Geoffrey Waite, Douglas Mao, and Naoki Sakai. Without Jonathan’s patience, precise critique and practical advice (plus a bit of prodding) all through these years, this dissertation would never have come into existence. Natalie taught me the true meaning of two English words, “comparative” and “compelling”, which I cannot quite translate into my mother tongue. Geoff trapped me in the Spinozist spider web, in which I am still joyfully tangled up. Doug joined the team later, fresh and full of energy, who was,

for me, like a smart and smashing older brother. Finally, it was a great honor for me to ask Naoki, whom I was too shy to talk to when I sneaked into his lectures in Tokyo long before I met him in Ithaca, to take part in the already very diverse group. I would also like to thank my former teachers at the University of Tokyo, Profs. Yoshiyuki Fujikawa, George Hughes, the late Hiroshi Izubuchi, Nicholas Midgley, Yōichi Ōhashi, Kazuhisa Takahashi, and Hisaaki Yamanouchi, who first taught me the joy of studying English Literature and Literary Theory, and who have always been supportive of my research and career, no matter how far my erratic, errant nature let me drift away from their expectations.

So many names of my dear friends and esteemed colleagues in so many places through so many years are inscribed on this dissertation that I must only despair of naming all in this limited space. I can name but a few, to whom my heartfelt gratitude is particularly due, *ordine geographico*: [Ithaca:] Aaron Moore, Akiko Ishii, Akin Adesokan, Alex Papanicolopoulos, Angela Naimou, Ben Middleton, Brett deBary, Chi-ming Yang, Constantinos Papadakis, David Rando, Esther Hu, Hideyuki Sadakane, Hyowon Kim, Iftikhar Dadi, Jade Ferguson, Javier Lezaun, John Noyes, Kyōko Selden, Laura Brown, Meg Wesling, Michael Shin, the late Mihoko Kajikawa, Mimi Yu, Nilanjana Bhattacharjya, Ogaga Ifowodo, Paola Iovene, Pedro Erber, Roger Gilbert, Ryan Canlas, Sheetal Majithia, Sze Wei Ang, Takeshi Kimoto, Travis Workman; [New York et al.:] Chizuru Kaneko, Nayoung Aimee Kwon, Nehal Bhuta, Nida Alahmad, Yasushi Katsume, Yuki Watanabe; [Tokyo:] Michiko Nishio, Noriko Imanishi, the late Kazuko Takemura, Keiko Nitta, Tadashi Tsuda, Kazuyoshi Ōishi, Haruko Takakuwa, Takashi Ōnuki, Shintarō Kōno, Naoki Watanabe, and the “Shokkinken” folks – Masafumi Yonetani, Hideaki Tobe, Hong Jong-wook, Choi Jin-seok; [Seoul:] Cha Seung-ki, Cho Kang-sok, Hwang Ho-duk, Kim Dong-shik, Ryu Jun-pil, Yi Young-jae; [Kyoto:] Master Akira Ono of the Kanze Noh school, Tatsuo Murata, Tae Yamamoto, Gengo Ito, Satoshi Mizutani, Silvio Vita, Makoto Hayashi, Jun’ichi Isomae, and “il Gruppo che viene” collective – Akio Tanabe, Yumiko Tokita, Takeshi Matsushima, Taiju Ōkōchi, Akihiro Kanabishi, Kōsuke Akamine.



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The members of my family – whose latest comer, my nephew Kōsei, was born, safe and sound, shortly after the Great Earthquake on 3.11, 2011 – have always been a source of support and encouragement. They include, of course, dear ones who have passed away, among whom, to my late grandpa, especially, this dissertation is dedicated. He once tried, unsuccessfully, to dissuade me from pursuing a career in literary study – “Listen to your grandpa, Yocchan, I *know* the business. . .” – but he would, I believe, be happier than anyone else about his grandson's achievements in his footsteps. I take it as good karma that this long-delayed dissertation was finally completed on his 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

*Ithaca – Tokyo – Kyoto, 2001-2012*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### < T. S. Eliot >

- ASG*      *After Strange Gods*. London: Faber & Faber, 1934. Print.
- CP*        *Collected Poems 1909-1962*. London: Faber & Faber, 1963. Print.
- EAM*      *Essays Ancient & Modern*. London: Faber & Faber, 1936. Print.
- FLA*      *For Lancelot Andrewes*. London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928. Print.
- ICS*      *The Idea of Christian Society*. London: Faber & Faber, 1939. Print.
- IMH*      *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917*. Ed. Christopher Ricks. London: Faber & Faber, 1996. Print.
- KE*        *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*. London: Faber & Faber, 1964. Print.
- LI*        *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Vol. I, 1898-1922*. Rev. ed. Ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton. London: Faber & Faber, 2009. Print.
- LII*      *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Vol. II, 1923-1925*. Ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton. London: Faber & Faber, 2009. Print.
- NTDC*    *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. London: Faber & Faber, 1948. Print.
- OPP*      *On Poetry and Poets*. London: Faber & Faber, 1957. Print.
- SE*        *Selected Essays*. Third enlarged ed. London: Faber & Faber, 1951. Print.
- SP*        *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*. Ed. Frank Kermode. London: Faber & Faber, 1975. Print.
- SW*        *The Sacred Wood*. Second ed. London: Methuen, 1928. Print.
- TCC*      *To Criticize the Critic*. London: Faber & Faber, 1965. Print.
- UPUC*    *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*. Second ed. London: Faber & Faber, 1964. Print.
- VMP*      *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*. Ed. Ronald Schuchard. London: Faber & Faber, 1993. Print.
- WLF*      *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts*. Ed. Valerie Eliot. London: Faber & Faber, 1971. Print.

## < Spinoza >

As for *Ethica* [E] and *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* [TdIE], references are made to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of Vloten & Land (Latin) and the Boyle translation (English), unless otherwise notified.

The first Arabic number specifies the part of the *Ethics*. The abbreviations following that numeral are as follows:

a	axiom
app	appendix
c	corollary
def	definition
d	demonstration (= “proof” in Boyle)
exp	explanation
le	lemma
p	proposition
pos	postulate
pref	preface
s	scholium (= “note” in Boyle)

For example, “E 2p7s” refers to the scholium of the 7<sup>th</sup> proposition in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the *Ethics*.

## < Bergson >

CE      *Creative Evolution*. Trans. Arthur Mitchell. London: Macmillan, 1911. Print.

CM      *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Trans. Mabelle L. Andison. 1946. Mineola: Dover Publications, 2007. Print. (English translation of *La Pensée et le Mouvant*)

MM      *Matter and Memory*. Trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. London: George Allen, 1911. Print.

## ***Introduction***

*He said: it is a geometric net  
And in the middle, like a syphilitic spider  
The Absolute sits waiting, till we get  
All tangled up and end ourselves inside her.*

--- T. S. Eliot's early fragment (Paris, March 1911)

This thesis has proved to have many cunning passages, contrived corridors and issues – not only due to the prolonged labor between its conception and composition, but also to the “double reading” that it tasks itself with analyzing while at the same time performing it. The project was launched, originally, as “T. S. Eliot & Empires”, now placed at the end of the thesis in a summary form (Chapter 5). To be more precise, the initial *elan* that drove the original project forward was an inspiration from the encounter with those unexpected, rather *uncanny*, mis/readings of “Tradition and the Individual Talent” by a prominent, certainly most influential, “pro-Japanese” intellectual in Colonial Korea (Ch’oe Chaesŏ) and a great, perhaps the greatest, philosopher in Imperial Japan (Nishida Kitarō).<sup>1</sup> The complexities involved in those highly political mis/readings of the “purely literary” theory of “Tradition” could hardly be explicated by the conventional “influence” model (i.e., one self-same original idea directly influences another), but instead required another model – that of *dissemination* and *appropriation*, developed by the poststructuralist / postcolonial

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<sup>1</sup> A note on Japanese and Korean names: as we are accustomed to on this side of the Pacific, we place surnames (e.g., Ch’oe and Nishida) first, followed by given names (e.g., Chaesŏ and Kitarō) from here on in the body of this thesis.

theories. The project was then aimed not at fishing for and condemning bits and pieces of Eliot's imperialistic discourse or practice, but at *theoretically* de-coding the "idea" of Empire and its "logic" (i.e., "ideology" in the sense that Hanna Arendt has theorized<sup>2</sup>) latent in Eliot's seminal essay on "Tradition", written in 1919, so as to analyze the ways in which this "idea" that had been envisaged by a "resident alien" (*metoikos*) living in the metropolis of one Empire was trans-coded (i.e., mis/read, *or* appropriated) by those in another Empire who tried to "explain" their subject-positions at their particular historical conjunctures. It goes without saying that, although Ch'oe Chaesŏ and Nishida Kitarō certainly identified themselves as subjects of the same "Great East Asian Empire" and believed in its World-Historical mission, their positions of enunciation were far from homogeneous, so that, in each case, the "idea" of Empire latent in Eliot's "Tradition" was actualized / differentiated in a singular way, differing from each other and from Eliot's. Tracing the lines of differentiation of those "mis/readings" (including Eliot's own later appropriation of his own "literary" theory into "cultural" and/or "political" theories) would, I hoped, illuminate the heterology, the *other* logic, inherent in Eliot's Theory – i.e., the "double reading" that is latent in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" but patent in some suppressed con-texts and pre-texts (Chapter 5 & Conclusion). And, for such a project, it

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. "An ideology is quite literally what its name indicates: it is the logic of an idea. Its subject matter is history, to which the 'idea' is applied; the result of this application is not a body of statements about something that *is*, but the unfolding of a process which is in constant change. . . . The 'idea' of an ideology is neither Plato's eternal essence grasped by the eyes of the mind nor Kant's regulative principle of reason but has become an instrument of explanation. To an ideology, history does not appear in the light of an idea (which would imply that history is seen *sub specie* of some ideal eternity which itself is beyond historical motion) but as something which can be calculated by it. What fits the 'idea' into this new role is its own 'logic,' that is a movement which is the consequence of the 'idea' itself and needs no outside factor to set it into motion" (Arendt *Origins* 469). It should also be noted that Arendt sees the totalitarian elements in ideology are not exceptional but general, the only question being whether or not those *latent* elements are actualized ("revealed") in certain historical conjunctures and discursive formations: "all ideologies contain totalitarian elements, but these are fully developed only by totalitarian movements, and this creates the deceptive impression that only racism and communism are totalitarian in character. The truth is, rather, that the real nature of all ideologies was revealed only in the role that the ideology plays in the apparatus of totalitarian domination" (470).

was expected that the theoretical backbone would be provided by Spinoza, or rather the so-called “New Spinozist” revival in the contemporary theory.

The passage of time has, however, led this project to other corridors and issues. Visiting the two major T. S. Eliot archives at Houghton Library (Harvard) and King’s College (Cambridge), I was provided not only with much knowledge of Eliot’s “academic philosophizing” but with some serendipities – especially I was given the opportunity to unearth the abundant marginalia in Eliot’s copy of Spinoza’s *Opera*, housed in the archives at King’s, whose existence is, of course, known to the public, but, to the best of my knowledge, no researcher has ever studied them extensively. *After such knowledge, what forgiveness?* Thus I set myself the task of analyzing those marginalia as faithfully and comprehensively as possible, while never letting go of the theoretical take on the issues of reading, *mis*-reading, and “double reading” – that is to say, I decided to take up the double task of positivistically re-constructing the hitherto-unstudied text (Eliot’s reading of Spinoza) and its hardly-ever-acknowledged context (the Anglo-American – or, to be more precise, Harvard-Oxford – academic milieu in which Eliot must have read Spinoza among other philosophical texts) and, at the same time, of theoretically de/constructing what I call Eliot’s “ethology of reading”, by way of analyzing his reading of Spinoza, especially by appealing to the phenomenal “New Spinozist” achievements brought by Louis Althusser, Pierre Macherey, Gilles Deleuze, and Giorgio Agamben among others. As for the former “positivistic” task, I believe I have made several humble contributions as regards the Spinozist context – neglected in current Eliot studies – for Eliot’s “academic philosophizing” (Chapter 1), and the possible Spinoza-Bergson connection – or, rather, a singular experience that would somehow have connected Spinoza and Bergson in Eliot’s mind – during his apprenticeship in philosophy (Chapter 2), as well as the faithful reproduction of those highly-significant but unfairly-overlooked marginalia (Chapters 3 & 4).

## Double Reading

The latter, “theoretical” take, on the other hand, has brought forth several significant issues that pertain not only to Eliot’s reading of Spinoza but also to Eliot’s Theory in general: his repression, or *symptomatic* oversights, of the Ontological question in favor of systematic “academic philosophizing” in epistemology, which is, in fact, apparently at odds with his palate for “relative materialism”, is always dogged by the return of the repressed, e.g., in the form of “body” or “Nature” that abruptly disrupts the course of his otherwise flowing philosophical arguments (as the Althusserian theory of “symptomatic reading” helps illuminate); his ambivalent “rage for Order”, torn between fear of chaos and anxiety about the loss of individuality and/or independence of particular beings, prevents him from comprehending the Spinozian doctrine of *Deus sive Natura*, or Immanence of Being, that operates on the Singular-Universal Axis (so that his reading would never emulate the theoretical edge of Deleuzo-Spinozian “expressionism”); his mis/reading of Spinozian “parallelism” as that which entails the prison-house of “my body” leads to an epistemological deadlock over the question of solipsism, which is only to be resolved rather violently by a “leap” at the imagined commonality based on “essential kinship” (as opposed to the idea of “inessential commonality” that Agamben ingeniously finds in Spinoza’s “common notions”); and so forth.

Those theoretical issues, having emerged through the process of reading Eliot reading Spinoza, do indeed shed light on the undercurrent *ethos* and logic (hence, “etho-logy”) of Eliot’s Theory in general, which may, in turn, be most compellingly analyzed by virtue of the (New) Spinozist theories of reading – “Spinoza reading Eliot”, as it were. Read, for example, the following statement by Deleuze, to whose reading of Spinoza this thesis is most indebted:

There is a double reading of Spinoza [la double lecture de Spinoza]: on the one



hand, a systematic reading in pursuit of the general idea [l'idée d'ensemble] and the unity of the parts, but on the other hand and at the same time, the affective reading, without an idea of the whole [sans idée de l'ensemble], where one is carried along or set down, put in motion or at rest, shaken or calmed according to the velocity of this or that part. (*Practical* 129)

The “double reading of Spinoza” consists, according to Deleuze, of the two modalities enveloped in one another (“at the same time”): the “systematic reading” as *organic* Theory with generalizing tendencies and the “affective reading” as *orgiastic* resistance to that very Theory without regard to any “idea of the [organic] whole”. It is, I dare maintain, not particular to Spinoza, but *exemplary* – as it is *singular* – of any Theory that claims to articulate the Universe, the Text (Deus, *sive* Natura, *sive* Scriptura<sup>3</sup>). Hence come those Deleuzo-Guattarian dualities (which are, emphatically, not *really* “binary oppositions” but names given to two “modalities” enveloped in one another), such as *major* and *minor*, *molar* and *molecular*, *arboreal* and *rhizomic*, *striated* and *smooth*, and so on. In the same vein, this thesis attempts to exercise the “double reading” of Eliot as explicated in the dual terms, such as “Philosophy” and “Poetry”, “History” and “Nature”, and even “Tiresias” and “Gerontion” – to which list may well be added the Bergsonian “two orders” (“the geometric order” and “the vital order”), which will play a significant role in Chapter 2 below.

This “double reading” of Eliot reading Spinoza does also relate to the “original” project concerning Eliot’s *idea* of Empire, thus bridging the Spinoza chapters (1 ~ 4) and Chapter 5. In the final chapter, the “double reading” will assume another pair of names,

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. “Unlike the case of God or right, Spinoza never wrote the phrase ‘Scriptura, sive Natura’. But he might have: the slogan indicates what makes Spinoza less the first practitioner of a critical-historical reading of the Bible or of a general hermeneutics (common readings that radically understate both the extent and the force of Spinoza’s critique of previous approaches to the Bible) than the first philosopher explicitly to consider Scripture, that is, writing, as a part of nature in its materiality, as irreducible to anything outside of itself, no longer secondary in relation to that which it represents or expresses, a repetition or emanation of something posited as primary. For Spinoza nature is a surface without depth; Scripture as part of nature conceals nothing, holds nothing in reserve. Instead of speaking of its meaning, we ought to speak of the effects it produces as a body among other bodies” (Montag *Bodies* 5).

“Meta-Oikos” and “meta-oikos” – rather clumsy neologisms I have coined from the Greek word “*metoikos*”. As has been briefly described above and will be fully discussed towards the end of Chapter 4, Eliot’s *failed* “double reading” of Spinoza – i.e., Eliot’s *foreclosure* of the Ontological question (“affective reading”) for the sake of the generalizing Theory (“systematic reading”) in his “academic philosophizing” brings about intractable disruptions, cracks and fissures in his texts – cannot but lead to a “leap” at the pseudo-idea of *essential* commonality among those particular members who are somehow “essentially akin” – in contradistinction to the Spinoza-inspired idea of “*inessential* commonality” among “*Whatever* singularities”, envisaged by Agamben in *The Coming Community*. It now goes without saying that such a “leap”, albeit merely metaphysical at this stage, will be unfolded in political as well as cultural theories as the logic of assimilation to *Meta-Oikos*, or “Big House” (Empire, Nation, Race, etc.), that claims to be the general Subject of the World History, allegedly endowed with the power of representing the “essential commonality” among those particular subjects who, in turn, *imagine* themselves to be “essentially akin” to one another.

Nevertheless, this bridging narrative is itself a kind of “systematic reading”, only one side of the “double reading”, so that it must be haunted by the doppelgänger-like “affective reading” of its own. The resisting moments latent in Eliot’s Theory of “Tradition”, which may not be apparent in the seminal essay itself but must none the less be enveloped in that very Theory, would potentially be developed into what I call the *meta-oikos* (trans-formative) moments by those uncanny mis/readings, *or* appropriations, featured in Chapter 5. In that respect, it is fair to say that each of those uncanny readings is not so much a particular “misreading” of the “original” text, as a singular actualization / differentiation of the virtual “double reading” (Theory and its resistance, enveloped in one another) at a singular subject-position in a certain discursive formation at a certain historical conjuncture. For that matter, even the so-called “original” text, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, itself can be regarded not as the source of “influence” (i.e., the

“emanation” model) but as just one of the multiple actualizations / differentiations (i.e., the “dissemination” model). Such a complicated, overdetermined structure of reading – multiple plies of the actual-extensive “mis/readings” as *effects* structurally determined by the virtual-intensive<sup>4</sup> “double reading” (or should we call it “one principal contradiction” after Althusser reading Mao<sup>5</sup> – or, more tropologically, the “permanent parabasis” after de Man reading Schlegel<sup>6</sup>?) – may be effectively explicated only by virtue of another Spinozist theory of reading, the “symptomatic reading”, to which we must now turn.

### Symptomatic Reading – or Reading Spinoza Reading

The first man ever to have posed the problem of *reading*, and in consequence, of *writing*, was Spinoza, and he was also the first man in the world to have proposed both a theory of history and a philosophy of the opacity of the immediate. With him, for the first time ever, a man linked together in this way the essence of reading and the essence of history in a theory of the difference between the imaginary and the true. This explains to us why Marx could not possibly have become Marx except by founding a theory of history and a philosophy of the historical distinction between ideology and science, and why in the last analysis

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. “Having its origin in Bergson, this concept [“multiplicities”] carries out a double displacement: on the one hand, the opposition of the one and the multiple loses its pertinence; on the other hand, the problem now becomes one of distinguishing between two kinds of multiplicity (one that is actual-extensive, divided into *parts* external to one another, such as matter or extension; and one that is virtual-intensive, dividing itself only into *dimensions* enveloped in one another, such as memory or duration)” (Zourabichvili *Deleuze* 180).

<sup>5</sup> See especially Althusser’s “Contradiction and Overdetermination” and “On the Materialist Dialectic”, both collected in *For Marx*.

<sup>6</sup> Paul de Man, reading Friedrich Schlegel, conceptualizes “irony” (and, by extension, “poetry” in general) as the “permanent parabasis”: “irony is the permanent parabasis of the allegory of tropes . . . The allegory of tropes has its own narrative coherence, its own systematicity, and it is that coherence, that systematicity, which irony interrupts, disrupts” (*Aesthetic* 179). Albeit through wholly different corridors, de Man seems to have arrived at the same inner chamber of the “double reading” here, so that it is, I believe, fair to *appropriate* de Manian notion of “resistance to theory” to our discussion. See also the footnote 15 below.

this foundation was consummated in the dissipation of the religious myth of *reading*. (Althusser *Reading* 17)

Reading Spinoza reading and/or writing would, according to Althusser, lead us to “a theory of the difference between the imaginary [*imaginatio* / *idea inadaequata*] and the true [*idea vera* / *idea adaequata*]”, or “between ideology and science”, and eventually to “the dissipation of the religious myth of *reading*”. Otherwise, we would stay in the world of *imaginatio*, suffering from the “oversights” that are structurally embedded in our “sightings”, just as Spinoza says, “[They] dream with their eyes open” (*E* 3p2s) – that is what Althusser calls “the first kind of *reading*” after Spinoza’s “*cognitio primi generis*”. In this world of *imaginatio*, where various “religious myths of *reading*” (e.g., *hermeneutics* of all kinds<sup>7</sup>) rule, “new objects and problems are necessarily *invisible* in the field of the existing theory, because they are *forbidden* by it . . . repressed from the field of the visible: and that is why their fleeting presence in the field when it does occur (in very peculiar and symptomatic circumstances) *goes unperceived*, and becomes literally an undivulgeable absence” (*Reading* 27). The “symptomatic reading” is, roughly speaking, to divulge such

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<sup>7</sup> Here I use the term “hermeneutics” in a most general sense, i.e., the art of interpretation of texts, whose goal is to dis-/un-cover the hidden “meaning” by means of various reading techniques. However, I would like to note that there is an “other” *sens* [sense / direction] – the *sens* as “other” – indicated by Jean-Luc Nancy’s reading of the Greek word *hermēneuein* – or, one may say, Nancy reading Nietzsche reading Plato [*Ion*] – in *Le partage des voix* (translated into English, slightly misleadingly, as “Sharing Voices”). Tracing the etymology of *hermēneuein*, Nancy finds that the role of hermeneutics consists in the “sonorous enunciation [*l’énonciation sonore*]” of the divine *logos*, “very far from consisting in the comprehension of a *logos* of the gods” – hence, “[h]*ermēneia* is the *voice* of the divine”, not a method of interpretation or representation (“Sharing” 236; translation modified). Nancy continues: “And this voice is first of all, principally (but that does not make it a *principle*; it is only *given* in this way), *voix partagée* [voices divided / partaken], the differentiation between singular voices. In other words, there is no *one* divine voice, nor perhaps a divine voice in general, because these ‘divine poems’ are spoken in the language or languages of men. But *the voice*, for the divine, is the dividing / partaking [*le partage*] and the difference” (236-7; translation modified). This concept of the originary “*partage*” [dividing / partaking] of the “divine *logos*” – which should no doubt remind the readers of Walter Benjamin’s “*die reine Sprache*” – seems to me to illuminate my preliminary speculations on the *virtual* “double reading”.

undivulgeable textual events that occur “in very peculiar and symptomatic circumstances” – e.g., abrupt eruptions of the repressed through textual ruptures or traces of the absent exteriority – so that the reader with “an *informed gaze*”<sup>8</sup> (28) may *see*, as Marx did, the invisible (“the inner darkness of exclusion”), making the “epistemological break” with *imaginatio* – that is what Althusser calls “the second kind of *reading*” after Spinoza’s “*cognitio secundi generis*”.

Our reading of Eliot reading Spinoza is not meant to emulate Althusser’s reading of Marx reading Adam Smith. Eliot’s reading of Spinoza does, to begin with, hardly amount to the “symptomatic reading” *à la* Marx. In fact, Eliot, by reading Spinoza, does not seem to make any “epistemological break” with the *problematic* that he has already held in his “academic philosophizing”, but instead he apparently reads his own problematic *into* Spinoza to the extent that his philosophizing comes to a deadlock, hence his eventual “break” by abandoning Philosophy for Poetry. Our task will then be not to feign a discovery of Eliot’s “symptomatic reading” of Spinoza, but rather to exercise *our* “symptomatic reading” of Eliot reading Spinoza, together with Eliot’s other contemporary writings, by way of examining Eliot’s *un*-reading (i.e., what he is unwilling or unable to read) as well as *mis*-reading (i.e., how he fails to articulate the text’s *problematic*, thus distorting his reading) through a closest analysis of the abundant marginalia in Eliot’s personal copy of Spinoza’s *Opera*, since the effects of the absent cause (i.e., actualizations of the virtual-intensive “double reading”) are most likely to reside, as symptoms, in those silences and stutters<sup>9</sup> that disrupt the otherwise harmonious reading. In other words, we will “read out loud” Eliot’s marginal notes side by side with Spinoza’s passages that they

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<sup>8</sup> Such a pedagogical dimension of Theory is taken up in a very practical and effective way by Fredric Jameson in his theorization of “an aesthetic of *cognitive mapping*” that “enable[s] a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of the city’s structure as a whole” (*Postmodernism* 51). It seems to fair to find a parallel between what Jameson here calls “that vast and properly unrepresentable totality” and what this thesis terms “the Virtual Whole” below.

<sup>9</sup> As for the textual “stutter”, see Deleuze’s “He Stuttered” in *Essays Critical and Clinical* and de Man’s “Anthropomorphism and Trope in Lyric” in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*.

annotate, in order to *measure silences and stutters* in Eliot's reading of Spinoza. Let us listen to Pierre Macherey, one of Althusser's disciples in the field of literary theory and no doubt a better reader of Spinoza than his Master:

What is important in the work is what it does not say. This is not the same as the careless notation 'what it refuses to say', although that would in itself be interesting: a method might be built on it, with the task of *measuring silences*, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged. But rather than this, what the work *cannot* say is important, because there the elaboration of the utterance is acted out, in a sort of journey to silence. (*Theory* 97; Macherey's italics)

Also, in his seminal critique of structuralism in literary theory ("Literary Analysis: The Tomb of Structures" (Nov. 1965), collected in the same book), Macherey makes a similar remark, but this time he sets it in the historical framework of demystifying the cutting-edge structuralist literary theory as "only a variant of theological aesthetics" – merely a new technique for hermeneutics to unearth the deep-hidden Truth named "Structure" – which is "content to give a new answer to the old question of aesthetics":

A different hypothesis [from the structuralist one], more fruitful though hardly ever used, might be offered: the work exists above all by its determinate absences, by what it does not say, in its relation to what it is not. Not that it can conceal anything: this meaning is not buried in its depths, masked or disguised; it is not a question of hunting it down with interpretations. It is not in the work but by its side: on its margins, at that limit where it ceases to be what it claims to be because it has reached back to the very conditions of its possibility. It is then no longer constituted by a factitious necessity, the product of a conscious or unconscious intention. (*Theory* 172)

Any reading method pertaining to "hunting it down with interpretations" – whether "it" is called "the true meaning" or "Structure" – is quite irrelevant to our purpose, since our task

*vis-à-vis* the margins in Eliot's copy of Spinoza's *Opera* is not to discover some hidden (possibly present) truth, the *true* "reading", which should be in waiting at the origin or at the end of our journey, but to make contact with an "absent exteriority", the *virtual* "double reading", which is never *actual* but always *real* as the absent cause of the symptoms found in the textual silences and stutters – by the side, on the margins, at the limit. "From the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the 'last instance' never comes" (*ForMarx* 113).

"Let us go then, you and I," as J. Alfred Prufrock would say, "through certain half-deserted streets". . . The streets, in our case, are those cunning, contrived marginalia, which seem to have been deserted for nearly a century, sitting silently in wait in the stacks of the Archive Centre at the end of a gothic corridor in King's College, Cambridge.

Streets that follow like a tedious argument  
Of insidious intent  
To lead you to an overwhelming question . . .  
Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'  
Let us go and make our visit.  
(“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” ll. 8-12; *CP* 13)

Do not ask what “it” is – for “it” never comes, but “it” always sits by our side, absent. . . .  
*But who is that on the other side of you?*

### **The *Ethology* of Reading – or Reading Eliot Reading**

There is a handwritten essay, held by Harvard's Houghton Library, "which might be

entitled ‘The Relationship between Politics and Metaphysics’<sup>10</sup>.” According to the note attached to the manuscript, “[i]t is obviously an address, and probably was read by T. S. Eliot before the Philosophical Society of Harvard, of which he was President, in either 1913 or 1914, when he was a graduate student and an Assistant in Philosophy”. This is one of Eliot’s earliest full-scale critical works extant – a very ambitious one at that – and, for that reason alone, it is of first-rate significance. The 24-page paper is a trenchant diatribe against *A Preface to Politics* (1913) by Walter Lippmann, Eliot’s contemporary at Harvard Philosophy, then already a luminary at the Socialist Club,<sup>11</sup> and now a promising journalist in New York City as one of the founding editors of *The New Republic* – in the paper, Eliot refers to Lippmann as “an able contemporary of my own, whom I regret not having known while in college” (3). Eliot regards Lippmann’s latest book as “a notable contribution to the contemporary literature of social enthusiasm”, and immediately opens fire by saying, “because I liked the book and yet found it at last the symbol for philosophical and political chaos, I think it worth of some detailed attention” (3). As the title of the paper suggests, Eliot’s critique is not so much of Socialism as a political movement, as of its underlying philosophy – “its demand for a philosophy of the lawless, an intellectual justification for anti-intellectualism, a metaphysical justification of its blind enthusiasm” (3), namely, “the great modern fallacies: the fallacy of progress, which is the Bergsonian fallacy, and the fallacy of the Relativity of Knowledge, which is the Pragmatic fallacy” (11). Along this line, Eliot criticizes Lippmann, Nietzsche, Sorel, and Marx (or, rather, “his followers . . . [who] did not read his book” (19)) on the philosophical bases, while declaring that his

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<sup>10</sup> “Relations[hip] between politics and metaphysics” (MS. bMS Am 1691 (25)) is a manuscript as part of the T. S. Eliot Collection held by Houghton Library, Harvard University. Hereafter, the T. S. Eliot materials held by Houghton Library are referred to as “MS [or TS] Houghton”; likewise, those held by the Archive Centre of King’s College as “MS [or TS] King’s”. The unpublished manuscripts and typescripts by T. S. Eliot cited in this dissertation are listed in the “Works Cited” section at the end. I should like to thank Mrs. Valerie Eliot for her generous permission to cite them extensively.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. “Eliot was not a very conspicuous figure in his first three years at Harvard. He was no leader, no public focus, like the political Walter Lippmann” (Howarth *Notes* 95).



“political creed” lies in the figures of “Aristotle, Disraeli, and Mr. E. Root” (13). Eliot ends his address by “quot[ing] in support of [his] position, and as a final criticism of Mr. Lippmann’s brilliant book, some words by the most distinguished of living American statesmen, Elihu Root” (24).

Manju Jain summarizes the importance of this paper as follows:

This paper is important not only because Eliot here clearly defines the reasons for his rejection of the anti-intellectualism of Bergsonism and pragmatism. At the early stage of his career he also articulates his conservative position in politics – a conservatism which is related to his awareness of the necessity of asserting the importance of reason and of tradition in order to counter the anti-intellectualism, liberalism, and radicalism of the contemporary milieu. Radicalism has become conventional, he writes, but he goes on to add that ‘no radical is so radical as to be a conservative’ (p. 2). (*American* 50)

This is indeed a fair summary of the *content* of that significant manuscript, but what interests me most is, rather, its characteristic *rhetoric*, as is found, for instance, in the rhetoric of such paradoxical statements as those quoted above: “no radical is so radical as to be a conservative” or “[Socialism’s] demand for . . . an intellectual justification for anti-intellectualism”. By *rhetoric*, I mean not only certain rhetorical devices such as above, but, rather, *Techné rhétoriké* in the wider, classical sense (i.e., the art of dialectic, or a set of *strategies* of persuasion in the public sphere).<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, here I would also

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<sup>12</sup> It may sound as if I am reversing Nietzsche’s “[p]rivileging figure [i.e., rhetoric as a system of tropes] over persuasion [i.e., skills of eloquence]” (de Man *Allegories* 130), but I use the term “rhetoric” rather loosely here as a set of one’s characteristic *strategies* of writing (roughly, a “style”), and my emphasis is rather on the following *Topica* as the art of inventing / discovering that which precedes and regulates the rhetoric but that which does not exist in itself (i.e., virtual) but only as the “absent cause” – for lack of a better term, I also call it “*ethos*”, in that it is immanently constitutive of what I call an “*ethology* of reading”. In other words, I am not so much concerned with the tropological deconstruction that de Man ingeniously exercises, as what de Man calls “an insurmountable obstacle” and its absent cause – i.e., the “absent *exteriority*” of the language system (hence, *symptoms*): “Considered as persuasion, rhetoric is performative but when considered as a

include *Topica*, the art of *inventio* (discovery), which “is both more useful and certainly prior [to the art of dialectic]” (Cicero *Topica* 387), that is to say, I would rather pay special attention to *Topica* as the art of discovering (*invenire*) the problems, or of actualizing the virtual *problematic* – “la Topique est accoucheuse de *latent*” (Barthes “L’ancienne rhétorique” 207). My concern in this thesis is, in short, not so much how Eliot writes what he can write, as how he reads what he cannot read. In other words, the task is to analyze the ways in which the virtual *problematic*, latent in a certain *topos*, that fails to be actualized by Eliot’s reading would emerge as a *symptom* – which is “present as a necessary absence” (Althusser *Reading* 29) in the form of such textual events as fissures and traces – in that very reading. Such an approach (or a reading of readings) does, I believe, amount to *critical* analysis of what I am tempted to call an “*ethology* of reading” – not “ethics” in the modern sense, but “ethology” that studies, without any preconceived “intention” or hidden “meaning” (“the figure in the carpet”), the characteristic ways in which certain animals (including humans) behave when brought into *contact* with external objects – in short, an “Ethics” in the Spinozian sense.<sup>13</sup> In the case of this present study of “T. S. Eliot

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system of tropes, it deconstructs its own performance. Rhetoric is a *text* in that it allows for two incompatible, mutually self-destructive points of view, and therefore puts an insurmountable obstacle in the way of any reading or understanding” (131). Jonathan Culler aptly *translates* the pair of “trope and persuasion” into “structure and event”: “The relationship between structure and event is incalculable, which is why rhetoric is fated, as the name of this incalculable textuality, to be simultaneously and alternatively a discourse of structure and event” (“Trope” 608). In a sense, what I call an “*ethology* of reading” is a take on this “incalculable” relationship – the “double reading” – between structure (*generalization* by Theory) and event (*singular* actualizations of the virtual-intensive) by means of the symptomatic reading.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. “Spinoza’s ethics has nothing to do with morality; he conceives it as an ethology, that is, as a composition of fast and slow speeds, of capacities for affecting and being affected on this place of immanence [ce plan d’immanence]. That is why Spinoza calls out to us in the way he does: you do not know beforehand what good or bad you are capable of; you do not know beforehand what a body or a mind can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement [agencement], a given combination” (Deleuze *Practical* 125). See also Macherey’s sympathetic reading of “Deleuze in Spinoza”: “Spinoza’s *Ethics*, as its very name indicates, is not just a theoretical work, which should be read in order to know the way in which he resolves certain questions, but it is above all a certain way of posing these questions, an attitude of thought and of life, or even a kind of ‘ethos,’ in the very sense of ethology” (*Materialist* 121).

reading Spinoza”, the mis/readings committed by an intellectual animal named “T. S. Eliot” in a certain “contact zone” (that is, Spinoza’s *Ethics*) will be studied. In that respect, I find no better prelude to this study than “The Relationship between Politics and Metaphysics”, not only because it is literally one of the earliest – hence, supposedly, “purest” – of Eliot’s critical readings of the texts by others, but also, more significantly, because it is already full of characteristic arrangements [*agencements*] that comprise Eliot’s “*ethology* of reading”, i.e., the arrangements that are to appear – actually or virtually, compulsively or symptomatically – here and there in his critical readings to come.

The *rhetorical* characteristics we find in “The Relationship between Politics and Metaphysics” may be paralleled with what Spivak calls the “formalization” mode of Derridean deconstruction, in which “[f]ormalization is achieved by passing through or ‘solving’ aporias, treating them as practical logical problems” (*Critique* 427; See Chapter 4 below for further discussion thereof). In other words, Eliot appeals to some formal, or logical, devices with a deconstructive flavor so as to critique various trends of contemporary philosophy. For instance, Eliot typically deconstructs the opponent’s foundation by revealing circularity of his/her argument, even to the extent of parodying it: “For Mr. Sorel, as you know, a myth – is as good as a mile. . . . I do not understand how Mr. Sorel avoids seeing that his theory of myths is itself a myth” (15) – or, more generally, circularity of any metaphysical argument: “the problem of the relation between metaphysics and political theory is itself a metaphysical problem” (1); “philosophy is to fit a need. On the other hand we cannot tell what this need is unless we philosophise” (21). Another typical deconstructive move concerns Eliot’s critique of Bergsonism and Pragmatism *together* as sharing the same foundation that is untenable: “So I feel at the bottom of Bergsonism and pragmatism (as I am convinced in the case of Nietzsche) a fundamental pessimism and despair. . . . Bergsonism and pragmatism are pessimistic just by their confusion (a confusion which becomes more evident in the avowedly social application of such authors as Mr. Lippmann) of human and cosmic activity” (19-20) – such an insight is,

in fact, based on the following general assumption that “the two philosophies, like all antithetical philosophies, tend to meet[, f]or they both reduce the world to illusion” (21). With these deconstructive critiques of the foundations, then, Eliot concludes this address thus: “I tried to show by illustrations from a clever book that any attempt to found politics on a metaphysical basis must be confusing and fallacious” (24).

Now to the *topical* side – midwifery for the virtual *problematic*. As already cited above, Eliot has picked up this particular book, “because [he] liked the book and yet found it at last the symbol for philosophical and political chaos, [he] think[s] it worth of some detailed attention” (3). All the terms of critique – “change”, “imperious impulse”, “enthusiasm”, “voluntarism”, “naturalism”, “biologism”, “vitalism”, “an abstraction called Life”, “the tyranny of Progress”, “the tyranny of Relativism”, and so forth – virtually stem from this one word, “chaos”. At one crucial point of his argument, we catch a glimpse of Eliot’s fundamental *ethos* in an unfounded, almost dogmatic, pro/denouncement:

Mr. Lippmann, I believe, wants very much the same Utopia that I do – when we want Utopia at all. And he has found out for himself, and publishes with delightful triumph, what the seven sages [of the Bamboo Grove?] knew already, that no machine is ever adequate to weave chaos into order. Thus he has fallen into the most dangerous of dogmas – the dogma that we must do without dogmas. Accordingly he commit[s] the great modern fallacies: the fallacy of progress, which is the Bergsonian fallacy, and the fallacy of the Relativity of Knowledge, which is the Pragmatic fallacy. (10-11)

We would probably all agree that the urge to “weave chaos into order” and the concomitant abhorrence of “the dogma that we must do without dogmas”<sup>14</sup> do indeed form a kind of

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<sup>14</sup> It is easy to see that such a passage as follows has provoked a sense of aversion in Eliot: “What Nietzsche has done here is, in his swashbuckling fashion, to cut under the abstract and final pretensions of creeds. Difficulties arise when we try to apply this wisdom in the present. That dogmas *were* instruments of human purposes is not so incredible; that they still *are* instruments is not so clear to everyone; and that they will be, that they should be – this seems a monstrous attack on the

*basso continuo* of Eliot's philosophy as well as his poetics and politics, all through his long career. Also, the almost dogmatic belief that there is no *adequate* "machine" for that purpose is, at least before his conversion and probably, to a certain degree, up until his death, the prime mover of his dialectical thinking in the form of relativism or scepticism. Since there is no adequate machine to "weave chaos into order", we are doomed to chaos; unless we happily indulge in chaos, we ought to ceaselessly "transcend" it, temporarily though it may, to a "higher" order. Here come the "standards" – a *realized* keyboard part, as it were, that accompanies and, at the same time, overcomes the *basso continuo* part. It is of great interest that we already have several types of such realization (or *actualization* of the *virtual* problematic), namely, a *real* "world of social values" and an *outside* "point of view":

Bergson, on the one hand, emphasises the reality of a fluid psychological world of aspect and nuances, where purposes and intentions are replaced by pure feeling. By the seduction of his style we come to believe that the Bergsonian world is the only world, and that we have been living shadows. It is not so. Bergson is the sweet Siren of adventurous philosophers and our world of social values is at least as real as his. (20)

For Bergson history is a vitalistic process in which human purposes do not exist; for pragmatism a chaotic process in which human purposes are illusory. For if all meaning is human meaning, then there is no meaning. If you assume only human standards, what standard have you? History, if it is to be interpreted at all, must be interpreted from a point of view which puts itself outside the process.

(21; Eliot's underline)

Not mere "human standards", but those which are *real* and *outside* – such yearnings after

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citadel of truth. It is possible to believe that other men's theories were temporary and merely useful; we like to believe that ours will have a greater authority. / It seems like topsy-turveyland to make reason serve the irrational. Yet that is just what it has always done, and ought always to do" (Lippmann *Preface* 235).

the *real* or the *outside* are not necessarily consistent with Eliot's "deconstructive" *strategy* of reading, but certainly necessary for his *ethos*, so that, as we will often encounter all through our discussion of "T. S. Eliot reading Spinoza" below, the *real* or the *outside* interrupts and disrupts the flowing narrative of Theory, often abruptly, often in the form of symptoms – i.e., the "affective reading" *resisting* the "systematic reading". Such moments of rupture we must capture by virtue of the "double reading" of Eliot's reading of Spinoza.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Should we perhaps speak of de Manian "resistance to theory" at this stage? We have already brought up the Deleuzo-Spinozist "double reading" (where "the systematic reading" [Theory with generalizing tendencies towards the *organic* whole] and "the affective reading" [*orgiastic* resistance to that very Theory] are *virtually* enveloped in one another) as *exemplary* of any Theory, and so, to a certain degree, what we have called the "ethology of reading" (where the *topical* "ethos" resists the *rhetorical* "strategy" of reading) plays a similar role in our setting. Of course, I do not intend to yoke this and that "resistance to theory" by the comparativist violence together, but, considering the fact that both de Man and I draw much inspiration from Walter Benjamin's philosophy of language, we may, in the spirit of "*com-paraison*" theorized by Natalie Melas (See the incipit of Chapter 5), give a brief meditation on the possible comparison between our "double reading" and de Manian "resistance to theory". Paul de Man writes: "The resistance to theory is a resistance to the rhetorical or tropological dimension of language, a dimension which is perhaps more explicitly in the foreground in literature (broadly conceived) than in other verbal manifestations or – to be somewhat less vague – which can be revealed in any verbal event when it is read textually. Since grammar as well as figuration is an integral part of reading, it follows that reading will be a negative process in which the grammatical cognition is undone, at all times, by its rhetorical displacement" (*Resistance* 17). The *critical* moment of this "negative process" is well captured by Jonathan Culler's explication of de Manian reading as "unflagging attention to what resists intelligibility, suspicion of the myriad totalizing procedures by which language is recuperated" (*Framing* 133). J. Hillis Miller, on the other hand, seems to normalize this critical moment by solely emphasizing the "negative" side of de Manian deconstruction of theory and/or reading, so that he may elevate "the law of unreadability" to the "ethics of reading" *per excellence* (*Ethics* 41-59; See also his "'Reading'") – here I cannot help sensing a kind of would-be totalizing "negative theology" of J. Hillis Miller (not necessarily, I believe, of de Man himself), which is diametrically opposed to the positive, multiple, orgiastic "misreadability" (i.e., *potentialities* of mis/readings, which is no different from the *virtual* "double reading" that actualizes, by differentiating, itself in each mis/reading) that we would like to promote in our reading. We would, in other words, not apotheosize the "impossibility" of Reading, but instead celebrate the (real but not actual) "potentialities" of mis/readings. In that respect, I have found quite inspiring, though perhaps not quite relevant to our present context, Cynthia Chase's ambitious *appropriation* of the "resistance-to-theory" thesis in her essay, "The Witty Butcher's Wife", in which she does not only make a successful deconstructive critique of Freud-Lacanian "conversion of resistance into theory" ("theory that takes the form of a conversion, or overcoming, of resistance, is necessarily the mirror image or symmetrical inverse of resistance" (998)), but also brings up several *topoi* of "resistance"

## **“The attempt to occupy a middle ground”**

There is just one more sentence from “The Relationship between Politics and Metaphysics” worth citing that may shed light on another, no less significant, aspect of the *ethology* of Eliot’s critical reading: “But popular philosophy never follows a theory to the bitter end, it prefers to vacillate” (22). Here, “vacillat[ion]” is not so much a critical strategy as only “prefer[ence]”. But such “prefer[ence]” becomes, when brought into a critical context, one of Eliot’s most self-conscious strategy of reading. To illustrate this side of Eliot’s *ethology* of reading, let us summon, as the second prelude to “reading Eliot reading”, another draft of a paper, possibly a lecture note, on Bergson, written in ink with some revisions in pencil, which is also stored in Houghton Library. Although the library catalogue indicates that it was written in “Paris, 1910-11”, it is generally agreed, after Lyndall Gordon, that Eliot drafted it shortly after he returned to Harvard in Fall 1911,<sup>16</sup> hence more or less conterminous with the above manuscript. In this paper, Eliot makes his issues clear at the outset:

The text of this paper is the *Données Immediates* [*Time and Free Will*], the 1<sup>st</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup>

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to such conversions (or, we may say, *topoi* of the Other), such as the “[*somatic*] hysterical conversion” (998) and Kristeva’s description of a “pre-mirror stage” as “a way of imagining the material and figural conditions of language, the status of language as figure and inscription prior to its existence as a phenomenal reality, as form and meaning” (1005). Rather than indulging in the “impossibility” of Theory (i.e., an “ethical” forbearance of *unreadability*), we would agree with Chase’s closing sentence, “It is not possible to give up resistance”, as a call for an *ethological*, “unflagging attention” to each and every singular mis/reading as actualization / differentiation of the virtual “double reading”, i.e., potential *misreadability*.

<sup>16</sup> “It is not in Eliot’s Paris hand, and must have been written some time after Eliot’s return to Harvard. My guess is 1913 or 1914 since he mentions F. H. Bradley, whom he was reading at that time, and uses the same paper as that of an address to Harvard’s Philosophical Society in 1913 or 1914.” (Gordon 59); Manju Jain guesses it was probably written in 1912-3 (40). The fact that Eliot mentions in this draft “the recent essay on la Perception du Changement” (5), Bergson’s Oxford lectures on May 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> 1911, published as a pamphlet by Clarendon later in the same year, shows that it is almost impossible for the draft to have been written in “Paris, 1910-11”, while the adjective “recent” seems to support the earlier date, i.e., Jain’s guess.

4<sup>th</sup> caps of Mat & Mem. [*Matter and Memory*] and the passage on Ideal genesis of matter in the C. E. [*Creative Evolution*] The attempt is to show certain inconsistencies —~~idealism vs. realism~~— in B's position, and is based on the conviction that the Idealistic is here the more fundamental. The points on which I here raise objections are [:]

in D.I. The antithesis of extrinsic & intrinsic multiplicity. If this antithesis breaks down we get a doctrine essentially absolutistic as well as idealist.

~~B. The inconsistencies of the *durée réelle*: can it contain qualitative multiplicity?~~

in M & M. The attempt to occupy a middle ground between idealism & realism.

The nature of matter and in C. E. its relation to consciousness.

(1; Eliot's deletions are faithfully reproduced here.)

The gist of this rather densely-argued, 27-sheet paper may be described, from our perspective, as follows: Bergson has admirably made the “attempt to occupy a middle ground between idealism & realism”, especially in Chapter Four and Conclusion of *Matter and Memory*, which Eliot regards as “a very remarkable and provocative – indeed tantalizing – piece of writing . . . one of the most interesting + most important parts of Bergson's work” (16), and yet, in the final analysis, Bergson fails to meet the promise of “occupy[ing] a middle ground”, so that he proves “essentially absolutistic as well as idealist”, hence suspect of “neo-Platonism” and even “a rather weakling mysticism” (22). I am not ready to dwell any further on the details of this Bergson paper,<sup>17</sup> but what is of particular significance here is that it was Bergson's “attempt to occupy a middle ground between idealism & realism” in *Matter and Memory* that Eliot the philosopher found “most interesting + most important”, while Eliot's deepest dissatisfaction with Bergson lies not in Bergson's alleged anti-intellectualism but in his re-introduction of the monistic, idealistic Absolute in the name of *durée réelle* as a consequence of failing to meet the promise of the middle way. As we will discuss in Chapter 2 below, Eliot's take on Bergson is not at all a

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<sup>17</sup> For detailed analysis of the Bergson paper, see Douglas 59-61; Maud Ellman 23-32; Jain 199-204; Habib 39-60.



banal anti-anti-intellectualism, but is based upon careful evaluation of what we will call “epistemologico-critical Bergson”.

The “attempt to occupy a middle ground between idealism & realism” is not only found in Eliot’s evaluation of epistemologico-critical Bergson, but lies, in fact, at the very core of his philosophical project, in the form of what may be called “strategic relativism” – in a sense, Eliot’s “fatal disposition towards scepticism”<sup>18</sup> has been elevated to the level of reading *strategy*. While writing a dissertation on F. H. Bradley, Eliot explains in a lengthy letter to Norbert Wiener (Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> 1915) his fundamental disbelief in metaphysics and belief in “[t]he Relativism I cordially agree with”, or “a relative materialism”<sup>19</sup> [that] is the way in which my sympathies incline” (*LI* 87). As Eliot writes, “nearly all of the subject matter I think we had already touched upon, at one time or another, in conversation” (*LI* 87), he has apparently been continuing philosophical conversation with this younger peer from Harvard, now studying under Bertrand Russell in Cambridge – the “ex-prodigy”, who is destined to make his name as the founder of cybernetics in the future. Let us now quote extensively from this letter, since I believe this is Eliot’s clearest and single most important statement with regard to his (anti-)philosophical *ethos*. To begin with, Eliot makes clear his standpoint that he takes sides, in a more or less Pragmatist fashion, with “reality”,

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<sup>18</sup> “In general philosophical discussion I did not often really ‘get anywhere’ with [Joachim], though this failure was due no doubt as much to my fatal disposition toward scepticism as to his Hegelianism” (Letter to J. H. Woods, Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> 1915; *LI* 91).

<sup>19</sup> Earlier, in one of his graduate papers at Harvard (dated May 25<sup>th</sup> 1913), Eliot has employed the term “relative naturalism”: “From our points of view the natural undoubtedly appears to precede the volitional (teleological). In this sense a relative naturalism would be defensible. But it does not explain the moral. For it does not explain itself. Accordingly God is quite as real as anything else! Not this God or that God, but at any moment some God” (“Report on the Ethics of Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason”; King’s MS). Apparently, such concern with morality has led Eliot to reject the term “naturalism” around the time he writes the above letter to Wiener from Oxford, as we find in a paper written at Oxford the following statement: “Indeed I hesitate for another reason to take the name of naturalism; the reason that I do not wish to league myself with those who find in biological utility the criterion for all moral value” (“Paper for Course in Philosophy [Ethics]” ca. 1915; MS Houghton). This slightest shift of viewpoints with regard to “naturalism” is probably due to what may be called Eliot’s Oedipus complex with Santayana. For detailed analysis of the latter paper on Ethics, see my Conclusion.

“experience”, “practice”, and “common sense” – against “philosophising”:

In a sense, of course, all philosophising is a perversion of reality: for, in a sense, no philosophic theory makes any difference to practice. It has no working by which we can test it. It is an attempt to organise the confused and contradictory world of common sense, and an attempt which invariably meets with partial failure – and with partial success. It invariably involves cramming both feet into one shoe: almost every philosophy seems to begin as a revolt of common sense against some other theory, and ends – as it becomes itself more developed and approaches completeness – by itself becoming equally preposterous – to everyone but its author. The theories are certainly, all of them, implicit in the inexact experience of every day, but once extracted they make the world appear as strange as Bottom in his ass’s head. (LI 87)

While denouncing the idealist “philosophising” as “a perversion of reality” uprooted from “practice” (somewhat reminiscent of Marxian critique), Eliot seems, none the less, also to reject a crude realist position by admitting the necessity of “an attempt to organise the confused and contradictory world of common sense”. What Eliot finds problematic is not Theory *per se*, but the “preposterous” theories that are “extracted”, or abstracted, from “the inexact experience of every day”. His “strategic relativism” is not that which nullifies both idealism and realism, but indeed that which “occup[ies] a middle ground” by not leaving the material reality untheorized while, at the same time, not allowing it to be completely theorized. Thus, according to Eliot, the “recommendation” that relativism suggests is “not to pursue any theory to a conclusion, and to avoid complete consistency” (LI 88),<sup>20</sup> and its practical advice is to “neglect *consciously*”:

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<sup>20</sup> It is of great interest that, when he preached a sermon in Magdalene College Chapel later in his life (1948), Eliot employed a much similar rhetoric, describing his conversion as a consequence of “pursuing scepticism to the utmost limit” (5). In other words, Eliot’s religious conversion may be understood as a logical consequence of rejection of the above (anti-)philosophical “recommendation” that his earlier “relative materialism” has suggested to him.

But one has got to neglect some aspects of the situation, and what relativism does, it seems to me, is to neglect *consciously* where realism protests that there is nothing to neglect, and idealism that it has neglected nothing. Thus I put, frankly arbitrarily, Reality and Value as opposite ends of a scale. Nowhere, of course, is either *utterly* absent. But I am content to say figuratively that the goal to which ‘reality’ strives is the world of the materialist. One is equally free to say that it ‘strives’ toward the other end too. Of course it does not get there, in either case.

(LI 88; Eliot’s italics)

This passage is indeed revealing as to Eliot’s (anti-)philosophical standpoint and, even more generally, his very *Weltanschauung*: Man should not presume to know either end of the scale – those ends are like black holes (or “God”, for that matter) – but should instead “occupy a middle ground” and “neglect *consciously*” whatever may lie at either end. Eliot is thus “content to say figuratively” – never literally – that his “relative materialism” should “strive” towards one end, never presuming to “get there”, while another theory should be allowed to “strive” just as legitimately towards the other end, in so far as s/he dares not claim to “get there”. That which Eliot has in mind as “the other end” here is apparently “the Absolute” of F. H. Bradley, as he has written earlier in the same letter:

the upshot is (or would be if I continued till I had really expressed my meaning) that relativism, strictly interpreted, is not an antidote for the other systems: one can have a relative absolute if one likes, for it is all one if one call[s] the Absolute, Reality or Value. It does not exist for me, but I cannot say that it does not exist for Mr Bradley. And Mr Bradley may say that the Absolute is implied *for me in my thought* – and who is to be the referee? (LI 87-8)

Such a relative point of view, or, more precisely, such a strategy of always assuming a “relative materialist” point of view in order to ward off – “neglect *consciously*” – any absolute point of view, does, I contend, lie at the very core of Eliot’s philosophical project,

which Eliot has apparently found in Aristotle, the quintessential “perfect critic”.<sup>21</sup> It is also fair to add that such an attitude of Eliot’s philosophizing shows, quite naturally, a high affinity for what Bradley calls “theoretical scepticism”<sup>22</sup> and also, as will be discussed in Chapter 1 below, possibly for Santayana’s “naturalist” point of view, which is, in turn, deeply rooted in Spinozian Ethics.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Cf. “[Aristotle] was primarily a man of not only remarkable but universal intelligence; and universal intelligence means that he could apply his intelligence to anything. . . in whatever sphere of interest, he looked solely and steadfastly at the object; in his short and broken treatise he provides an eternal example – not of laws, or even of method, for there is no method except to be very intelligent, but of intelligence itself swiftly operating the analysis of sensation to the point of principle and definition” (“The Perfect Critic” (July 1920); *SW* 10-11); “Leibniz’ account of physical matter is a much more scientific, but in some respects much cruder, explanation than Aristotle’s. For Aristotle’s account is fundamentally a relativistic one, i.e., ‘matter’ has various meanings in relation to shifting points of view which form a series but are not themselves defined. There are meanings in various contexts, but no absolute meaning; and the series of points of view, the series of contexts, has no absolute meaning either. . . . Aristotle is too keen a metaphysician to start from a naïve view of matter or from a one-sided spiritualism. To a certain extent Leibniz keeps this middle ground too. But his metaphysics tend to fall apart . . .” (“The Development of Leibniz’ Monadism” (Oct. 1916); *KE* 186-7, 188).

<sup>22</sup> In the preface to his magnum opus, *Appearance and Reality* (1893), Bradley has famously declared: “The chief need of English philosophy is, I think, a sceptical study of first principles, and I do not know of any work which seems to meet this need sufficiently. By scepticism is not meant doubt about or disbelief in some tenet or tenets. I understand by it an attempt to become aware of and to doubt all preconceptions. Such scepticism is the result only of labour and education, but it is a training which cannot with impunity be neglected” (x) – mark here that those words in the final sentence (“labour”, “education”, and “training”) recur in Eliot’s early *ars poetica*. Although Bradley seems to turn rather defensive against the charge of scepticism and even nihilism in his later works, and apparently refuses to identify the standpoint of “theoretical scepticism” as his own, describing it as “the mere denial of any known satisfactory doctrine, together with the personal despair of any future attainment”, he does nevertheless “admit that with many persons this may be the intelligent outcome of a sincere metaphysical endeavour” (*Truth* 445). Bradley’s additional explanation that immediately ensues seems to describe the *critical* aspect of Eliot’s “relative materialism” well: “Such a scepticism, I would add, if not the best issue, may serve at least as a deliverance from spiritual oppression. For it may free us on every side from the tyranny of intellectual prejudices, and in our own living concerns from the superstitious idolatry of abstract consistency. For such a scepticism all our truths without exception are mere working ideas” (*ibid.*). In “Francis Herbert Bradley”, which he originally wrote as a *TLS* review in the year of his conversion, Eliot commends Bradley’s “scepticism and uncynical disillusion” and, significantly enough, connects it to “religious understanding”: “Of wisdom Bradley had a large share; wisdom consists largely of scepticism and uncynical disillusion; and of these Bradley had a large share. And scepticism and disillusion are a useful equipment for religious understanding; and of that Bradley has a share too” (*SE* 449-450).

<sup>23</sup> Of course, it should also be fair to argue that Eliot has most likely learnt such “strategic relativism” from the double-negative logic of the *Mādhyamika* (“the middle path”) school of Mahayana

## **“annihilation and utter night”**

It is in this context that we find, in Chapter One of his doctoral dissertation, which “take[s] up Bradley’s doctrine of ‘immediate experience’ as the starting point of knowledge” (KE 15), such a definitive – or definitely relativistic – statement as follows:

Experience alone is real, but everything can be experienced. And although immediate experience is the foundation and the goal of our knowing, yet no experience is only immediate. There is no absolute point of view from which real and ideal can be finally separated and labeled. All of the terms turn out to be unreal abstractions; but we can defend them, and give them a kind of reality and validity (the only validity which they can possess or can need) by showing that they express the theory of knowledge which is implicit in all our practical activity.

(KE 18)

On one hand, Eliot seems to have successfully deconstructed the real-ideal dichotomy by allowing “no absolute point of view” but instead only “*a kind of* reality and validity” (Cf. “Reality and Value” in the above-quoted letter to Wiener), and yet, on the other hand, it also seems to be the case that, by making “immediate experience” and/or “the Absolute” untouchable and undeconstructible “hypothetical limits” (KE 30), Eliot simply expels, or *forecloses*, “the overwhelming question” – the Ontological question as to “the foundation and the goal of our knowing” – from the scope of his philosophical endeavor (“Oh, do not ask, ‘What is it?’”), so that its specter, we might as well anticipate, should haunt his

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Buddhism, of which Nagarjuna is the most prominent figure. At Harvard, Eliot took a course on Mahayana Buddhism (Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1913 – May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1914), taught by Anesaki Masaharu, a visiting professor from the University of Tokyo. The notes of those lectures that Eliot ardently took are held by Houghton Library (“Notes on Eastern Philosophy”; MS Houghton). According to one of those notes (Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>), Anesaki, explaining the Cosmology of the Shingon and Tendai schools of Japanese Buddhism, explicates the essential logic of “the middle path” thus: “The views that the world exists or not, both are false, the truth lies in the middle, transcending both views”. As for the significance of “the middle path” in Eliot’s philosophy as well as poetry, see Murata; Perl and Tuck.

theoretical texts on and off, unless it were ever to be successfully exorcised (“But who is that on the other side of you?”).<sup>24</sup> In fact, already at the end of this same chapter, the specter seems to have assumed some uncanny dark power, and the philosopher can only set bounds and exonerate himself from facing it:

We are led to the conception of an all-inclusive experience outside of which nothing shall fall. If anyone object that mere experience at the beginning and complete experience at the end are hypothetical limits, I can say not a word in refutation for this would be just the reverse side of what opinions I hold. And if anyone assert that immediate experience, at either the beginning or end of our journey, is annihilation and utter night, I cordially agree. That Mr Bradley himself would accept this interpretation of his (*Truth and Reality*, p. 188) ‘positive non-distinguished non-relational whole’ is not to be presumed. But the ultimate nature of the Absolute does not come within the scope of the present paper. It is with some of the intermediate steps that the following chapters are concerned.

(KE 31)

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<sup>24</sup> The specter of “the overwhelming question” as to the Ontological foundation of Theory (Philosophy as well as Poetics) does, in fact, haunt Eliot’s texts, often abruptly at the end, as if it were “moved by fancies that are curled / Around these images, and cling: / The notion of some infinitely gentle / Infinitely suffering thing” (“Preludes”; *CP* 24-5), and whenever the shadow of the specter surfaces on the pages, Eliot does immediately and apologetically, as his contemporary (early) Wittgenstein would do aggressively, “draw a limit” (*Tractatus* 3) and cling to his conception of “definition” as the “setting of bounds; limitation” (*NTDC*). The most symptomatic and revealing case in that respect is found at the very end of his Harvard lectures in 1932-3: “[Poetry] may make us from time to time a little more aware of *the deeper, unnamed feelings* which form *the substratum of our being*, to which we rarely penetrate; for our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves, and an evasion of the visible and sensible world. But to say all this is only to say what you know already, if you have felt poetry and thought about your feelings. And *I fear that I have already, throughout these lectures, trespassed beyond the bounds which a little self-knowledge tells me are my proper frontier*. If, as James Thomson observed, ‘lips only sing when they cannot kiss’, it may also be that poets only talk when they cannot sing. I am content to leave my theorizing about poetry at this point. The sad ghost of Coleridge beckons to me from the shadows” (*UPUC* 155-6; my emphasis). A similar pattern is found at the end of “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, in which the celebrated “impersonal theory” of poetry is dogged by an almost dogmatic counter-statement (“But, of course, only those who have personality and emotion know . . .”), which is, in turn, immediately followed by a characteristic gesture of “draw[ing] a line”: “This essay proposes to halt at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism, and confine itself to such practical conclusions . . .” (*SW* 58-9). As for a most insightful speculation over/in the specter or “the *revenant*”, see Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*.

“Annihilation and utter night” is certainly reminiscent of Indo-Buddhist thought<sup>25</sup> as well as Hegel’s well-known denunciation of Spinoza’s philosophy, both of which Eliot studied earnestly at Harvard. It may be worth citing Hegel’s reading of Spinoza, since one of Eliot’s marginal notes in Spinoza’s *Ethics* (to *E* 1p8s1) – “All determina- / tion is negation” – clearly reveals that he has been well informed of Hegel’s reading of Spinoza.<sup>26</sup> Here is a passage from Hegel’s *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*:

As all differences and determinations of things and of consciousness simply go back into the One substance, one may say that in the system of Spinoza all things are merely cast down into this abyss of annihilation. But from this abyss nothing comes out; and the particular of which Spinoza speaks is only assumed and presupposed from the ordinary conception, without being justified. (288)

A similar association of Spinoza’s “Substance” with “night” is, in passing, found in Hegel’s *Science of Logic* as well, and, interestingly enough, there it is associated with “the oriental

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<sup>25</sup> Eliot’s “Notes on Eastern Philosophy” (MS Houghton) contains several handouts prepared by Anesaki Masaharu, one of which is on the life and work of Kukai (774-835; Founder of the Shingon School of Japanese Buddhism). On the flipside of this handout, Eliot scribbled a rather enigmatic poem:

Born Born Born and Born  
Still dark of the origin of birth.  
Perishing etc.  
And yet veiled as to the end of death.

A good reader of Eliot’s poetry may immediately associate these four lines with “O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark” in “East Coker”. However, these four lines are no doubt taken from the famous poem by Kukai, concerning ordinary men’s ultimate ignorance of the secret of reincarnation, which Anesaki probably recited or wrote on the blackboard as an aside in his lecture. In that sense, it should, in turn, be possible to argue that the above-mentioned famous line in “East Coker”, often associated with *Samson Agonistes*, may contain a certain distant echo of Kukai’s poem on reincarnation. It would indeed be of great interest to investigate how deep those Indo-Buddhist teachings that Eliot had learnt at Harvard ran as a sort of volcanic undercurrent throughout his career as a philosopher *and* poet.

<sup>26</sup> It is known that Eliot’s copy of Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, held by Harvard’s Houghton Library, contains a significant amount of Eliot’s marginalia (Gordon 63; Jain 96, 146).

conception of emanation”.<sup>27</sup> With these comments, for sure, Eliot would cordially agree, and so would his teacher, Josiah Royce (See Chapter 1 below).

Here, we get another, more (*anti-*)*philosophical* formulation of Eliot’s *ethology* of reading: Always “attempt to occupy a middle ground” and “not to pursue any theory to a conclusion, and to avoid complete consistency”, while “neglect[ing] *consciously*” whatever lies “at either the beginning or end of our journey”. Looked from the other side, however, it is safe to argue that such a relativistic foreclosure of an absolute point of view is, in fact, based on the assumption that there be One Unknowable Whole that grounds the very possibility of knowledge but that is itself unknowable (“although immediate experience is the foundation and the goal of our knowing, yet no experience is only immediate”). Certain uneasiness involved here is well expressed in the penultimate paragraph of Eliot’s dissertation:

We are forced to the assumption that truth is one, and to the assumption that reality is one. But dissension rises when we ask the question: what one? Our system has pretended to be about the world of those who do not accept it as much as about the world of those who do. And the world, as we have seen, exists only as it is found in the experiences of finite centers, experiences so mad and strange that they will be boiled away before you boil them down to one homogeneous mass. (*KE* 168)

Eliot feels that he is “forced” to accept the monistic “assumption” that Truth/Reality is “one” – or, rather, “zero”, which ancient Indians discovered for the first time in human history. In “Leibniz’ Monads and Bradley’s Finite Centres”, which Eliot contributed to the

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<sup>27</sup> “In a similar manner [as in Spinoza’s system], in the oriental conception of *emanation* the absolute is the light which illumines itself. Only it not only illumines itself but also *emanates*. Its emanations are *distancings* [*Entfernungen*] from its undimmed clarity; the successive productions are less perfect than the preceding ones from which they arise. The process of emanation is taken only as a *happening*, the becoming only as a progressive loss. Thus being increasingly obscures itself and night, the negative, is the final term of the series, which does not first return into the primal light.” (Hegel *Science* 538-9)



prestigious philosophical journal *The Monist* (Oct. 1916), he “suggest[s] that from the ‘pluralism’ of Leibniz there is only a step to the ‘absolute zero’ of Bradley, and that Bradley’s Absolute dissolves at a touch into its constituents” (KE 200). The Absolute is, in short, that which is not (yet) actualized, thus uncountable (whether you call it “one” or “zero”), but which is always-already liable to actualization / differentiation, or “dissol[ution] into its constituents” – that is to say, the Absolute is not an *actual* Totality, but a *virtual* Whole, which is *real without being actual, ideal without being abstract* (Proust)<sup>28</sup> – not a visible or legible “structure”, but an “absent *exteriority*”.<sup>29</sup>

This Virtual Whole, which Eliot is willy-nilly “forced” to accept, may heuristically be associated with the Spinoza-Bergson-Deleuze triangle – in fact, Bradley’s definition of the Absolute as a “positive non-distinguished non-relational whole”, cited by Eliot above, is strikingly similar to that of Spinoza’s “*Deus sive Natura*”<sup>30</sup> or, *mutatis mutandis*, that of Bergson’s “*durée*”.<sup>31</sup> There is, however, an unfathomable chasm between Eliot’s

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. “Perhaps the word virtuality would precisely designate the mode of the structure or the object of theory, on the condition that we eliminate any vagueness about the word. For the virtual has a reality which is proper to it, but which does not merge with any actual reality, any present or past actuality. The virtual has an ideality that is proper to it, but which does not merge with any possible image, any abstract idea. We will say of structure: *real without being actual, ideal without being abstract* [Proust]” (Deleuze “Structuralism” 178-9).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Althusser wrote to Macherey after reading the latter’s seminal critique of structuralism (“The Tomb of Structures”, above mentioned), which apparently persuaded the Master out of structuralism: “I have understood what you indicated to me one day, when you told me that the concept of ‘latent structure’ appeared to you dubious. . . . I now see clearly what you meant. . . . It is that the concept is ambiguous, divided between a conception of structure as interiority, therefore as the correlate of an *intention*, or at least of a unity, and another conception, very close to yours, in which structure is thought as an absent *exteriority*” (qt. Montag “Introduction” to Macherey *Materialist* 7).

<sup>30</sup> When Bradley unequivocally pronounces that “the Absolute is not God”, it becomes all the clearer that Bradley’s “Absolute or the Universe” is fundamentally similar to Spinoza’s “God or Nature”, though Bradley has never acknowledged this apparent affinity: “The Absolute for me cannot be God, because in the end the Absolute is related to nothing, and there cannot be a practical relation between it and the finite will. When you begin to worship the Absolute or the Universe, and make it the object of religion, you in that moment have transformed it. It has become something forthwith which is less than the Universe” (*Truth* 428). In that respect, Bradley’s philosophy does *potentially* pertain to atheism – so does, by analogy, Eliot’s. It is in this context, I believe, that both are *forced* to demand “faith” at the end, or the deadlock, of their philosophizing (See Chapter 4 below).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. “Every species is thus an arrest of movement; it could be said that the living being turns on

approach and theirs to the Virtual Whole. As has been discussed above, Eliot's "strategic relativism" *forecloses* any knowledge – or, more precisely, even any "attempt" at cognition – of the Virtual Whole (i.e., "the Absolute" or "immediate experience") and instead concentrates on the theory of knowledge without questioning "the foundation and the goal of our knowing", thus exonerating himself from the Ontological question.<sup>32</sup> On the contrary, Spinoza's Method, as well as Bergson's "philosophical intuition", requires one to "arrive at knowledge of [the most perfect] Being as quickly as possible" and to begin with God – the method Althusser calls "a supreme strategy".<sup>33</sup> Read, for instance, the following paragraph in Spinoza's *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*:

Let us now return to our subject. First, we have treated the end toward which we strive to direct all our thoughts; second, we learned which is the best perception, by whose aid we can reach our perfection; third, we learned which is the first path our mind must enter on 「 to begin well – which is to proceed in its investigation according to certain laws, taking as a standard a given true idea. 」

If this is to be done properly, the Method must, first, show how to distinguish a true idea from all other perceptions, and to restrain the mind from those other perceptions; second, teach rules so that we may perceive things unknown according to such a standard; third, establish an order, so that we do not become weary with trifles. When we came to know this Method, we saw, fourth, that it

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itself and *closes itself*. It cannot be otherwise, since the Whole is only virtual, dividing itself by being acted out. It cannot assemble its actual parts that remain external to each other: The Whole is never 'given.' And, in the actual, an irreducible pluralism reigns – as many worlds as living beings, all "closed" on themselves" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 104).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. "There are evidently three divisions of the question: the problem of the genesis of knowledge, of the structure of knowledge, and of the possibility of knowledge. It is, I believe, the position of all sound idealism, and I believe is the position of Mr Bradley, that the only real problem is the second. For it may be said, in criticism of the first problem, that it does not deal with objects of *knowledge*, and in criticism of the third, that there are no *objects* of knowledge, when the object is treated as a hard and fast reality" (KE 84-5).

<sup>33</sup> "A supreme strategy: [Spinoza] began by taking over the chief stronghold of his adversary, or rather he established himself there as if he were his own adversary, therefore not suspected of being the sworn adversary, and redispensed the theoretical fortress in such a way as to turn it completely around, as one turns around cannons against the fortress's own occupant" (Althusser, "Materialist" 10-11).

will be most perfect when we have the idea of the most perfect Being. So in the beginning we must take the greatest care that we arrive at knowledge of such a Being as quickly as possible.

(*TdIE*, Paragraph 49; Trans. De Dijn 75; Eliot's emphasis [「 」] and underline)

This Paragraph 49 of *TdIE* is a well-known *locus classicus* as regards Spinoza's Method, and so Eliot naturally shows special interest by marking off the passage, "to begin well – which is to proceed in its investigation according to certain laws, taking as a standard a given true idea". This suggestion as to how "to begin well", which Eliot has apparently found significant, is, however, only a "good" preparation for the "perfect" Method – much like Wittgenstein's ladder. The real weight of the Method lies, as Spinoza is to put into practice in the *Ethics*, in the final sentence of the above paragraph: "So in the beginning we must take the greatest care that we arrive at knowledge of such a Being as quickly as possible", but Eliot has left the latter part of the paragraph untouched.

Eliot's reading of this particular passage seems symptomatic of his overall mis/reading of Spinoza, or his *foreclosure* of the Spinozian "double reading": Eliot is only interested in the epistemologico-critical aspect of Spinoza (setting the "standard" for the "investigation according to certain laws" [certis legibus inquirere]), while exonerating himself from facing the fundamental, or foundational, question concerning "the most perfect Being [Entis perfectissimi]", which is, in fact, the Ontological ground for that very "standard". This is, in short, one grave consequence of Eliot's "strategic relativism", which allows him to *bracket* the Virtual Whole so that he may not be led to "the overwhelming question" – such is, after all, Eliot's theoretical *strategy* of reading in the face of (or, rather, in the attempt to de-face) a deep undercurrent of his *ethos* that never loses the sense of "contact" with the Virtual Whole. In what follows, then, after establishing the context of Eliot's reading Spinoza (Chapter 1), we will analyze in detail the marginalia in his copy of Spinoza's *Opera*, alongside with his occasional reference to

Spinoza in his writings, as a set of particularly intensive manifestations of such *ethological* (i.e., pertaining to what Spinoza calls *Ethica*) struggles between *strategy* and *ethos* – between the generalizing or structuring tendency of Theory (*Rhetorica*) and “events” as singular actualizations / differentiations of the Virtual (*Topica*) – so that we may examine how the great stream of Eliot’s Theory (which aims to generalize – or *de-ethologize*, as it were – his particular mis/readings) is, at times, interrupted and disrupted (thus invigorated) by various sporadic (or *rhizomic*) eruptions of the deep *ethotic* undercurrent (Chapters 2 ~ 4). And, finally in Chapter 5, as if led by Eliot’s oracle, “In my beginning is my end” (“East Coker”), we will turn to the “original” project of “Eliot & Empires” as a political *supplement* – a dangerous one at that – to our “reading T. S. Eliot reading Spinoza”.

### Notes on *Empire* and Poetry

In what follows, the reader might well feel that *Empire* and Poetry are somewhat missing. *Empire* is, needless to say, the 2000 blockbuster, co-authored by Negri & Hardt, which is openly, almost ostentatiously, of the Spinozist persuasion. As this is a dissertation on T. S. Eliot in tandem with Spinoza *and* Empire, written in the post-*Empire* academic milieu, one should no doubt expect Antonio Negri, one of the most powerful “New Spinozist” thinkers in Europe today as well as the mastermind of *Empire*, to play a godfather role in this thesis. Indeed, the Negri connection is so obvious that I should be required to give a brief account of why there is so little Negri in the ensuing argument. I should now be able to rationalize, with the benefit of hindsight, the reason for this glaring absence: That’s because Negri’s “Spinoza *and* Empire” do not seem to share the grounds for comparison to Eliot’s at all.

First of all, Spinoza’s texts in question. As we will presently see, Eliot’s marginalia in his copy of Spinoza’s *Opera* are almost exclusively concentrated on *Tractatus de*

*Intellectus Emendatione* [*TdIE*] and Part I & II of *Ethica* [*E*], with little evidence of reading half as seriously the rest of *Ethica*, and, as for *Tractatus Politicus* [*TP*] and *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, cap.I-III [*TTP*], collected in the same volume, the pages are even uncut. Negri's Spinoza does, on the other hand, have a definite, (r)evolutionary narrative – Michael Hardt, in his “Translator's Foreword” to Negri's *Savage Anomaly*, rightly speaks of “Negri's most important contribution” as “the ontological *destiny* and the political centrality of Spinoza's metaphysics of power” (xv; my emphasis). In this narrative, Spinozian “utopian humanism”, developed on “the first stage of the metaphysical system [i.e., *TdIE* and *E* I-II]”, has come to a “crisis” and is “interrupted” by the urge to write *TTP*, which “represents an intermediary and critical stage in the development of Spinoza's metaphysics” (“Reliqua”221), so that it prepares the way for “the second stage of the *Ethics* [III-IV]”, where “*natura naturata* wins a total hegemony over *natura naturans*” (*Savage* 129). This narrative culminates in *TP* as “a kind of constitutive project of the real” (“Reliqua” 221), whose reflection on democracy was abruptly cut short by Spinoza's death but whose definition of democracy as “*omnino absolutum imperium*” allows Negri to identify “the ontological destiny” in the figure of “*multitudo*”, destroyer and preserver of Empire. Here, it is certainly possible to point out a certain homology between this narrative of Spinoza's “development” and that of *Empire*. Read, for instance, the incipit of the important intermezzo, “Counter-Empire”: “The trajectory we have traced up until now – from our recognition of modernity as crisis to our analyses of the first articulations of a new imperial form of sovereignty – has allowed us to understand the transformations of the constitution of world order” (*Empire* 205), which prepares the way for “the productive, ontological dimension of the problematic and the resistances that arise there” (206). In any case, since this thesis is not “Reading Negri Reading Spinoza”, we should stop here by simply confirming the fact that the object of Eliot's interest in reading Spinoza is, as far as Negri is concerned, nothing but the earlier part of Spinoza that has been “simply overthrown” (*Savage* 129) in the course of “the ontological destiny”.

There also lies definite incommensurability between them in terms of what is above described as the “ethology of reading”. On one hand, the following sentence does, I believe, put Negri’s reading of Spinoza – hence, by extension, his “ethology of reading” – in a nutshell: “The denial of the concept of mediation itself resides at the foundation of Spinozian thought” (*Savage* 140). Eliot’s thinking seems, on the other, to be based on (ceaseless search for) mediations – or “catalysts”, such as “Tradition”, “Orthodoxy”, “Church”, “Europe”, and so on – through and through, hence *bracketing* “immediate experience” and/or “the Absolute”. Their use of Augustinian City of God does, I believe, illustrate the incommensurability in a significant way. Negri & Hardt talk of “Counter-Empire”, stating that “we might take inspiration from Saint Augustine’s vision of a project to contest the decadent Roman Empire”, whose “divine city is a universal city of aliens, coming together, cooperating, communicating” (*Empire* 207) – an appropriate image of the “*multitudo*” as a dynamic new subjectivity composed of those heterogeneous, hybrid, “alien” (or “*meta-oikos*”) singularities in communication on the basis of “the common”.<sup>34</sup> This City of God as “Counter-Empire” (incarnated in the form of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), for instance) is an un-mediated “non-place”, which is never localized but global, never transcendent but immanent, never ideal but material – “The non-place has a brain, heart, torso, and limbs, globally” (210).

Eliot’s Platonic-Augustinian City of God is, on the other hand, properly called a *beyond-place* in contrast to London’s “urban apocalypse”, that is to say, a transcendent *topos*, through whose mediation one can find “a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (“Ulysses, Order and Myth”; *SP* 177). Read the following fragment, which was initially part of “The Fire Sermon” (i.e., Part III of *The Waste Land*)

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. “Singularities interact and communicate socially on the basis of the common, and their social communication in turn produces the common. The multitude is the subjectivity that emerges from this dynamic of singularity and commonality” (Negri & Hardt *Multitude* 198).

but was eventually suppressed at Pound's suggestion:

London, the swarming life you kill and breed,  
Huddled between the concrete and the sky:  
Responsive to the momentary need,  
Vibrates unconscious to its formal destiny,  
(WLF 31)

Ever since the publication of the *Original Draft of The Waste Land* (1971) and the immediately ensuing analyses of it by several major Eliot scholars,<sup>35</sup> this fragment had been widely accepted as the “original” *Waste Land*, i.e., the very first composition that even predated “Gerontion” – until this long-believed chronology was conclusively denied in this century by Lawrence Rainey’s scrupulous, systematic study of the typewriters and papers used for those typescripts.<sup>36</sup> Although there is no doubt as to Rainey’s chronology with regard to those *extant* typescripts, I am still tempted to give my assent to Hugh Kenner’s “urban apocalypse” thesis, with a little Benjaminian twist, that is to say, the original inspiration was to write a post-Great-War-London poem after the manner of Dryden’s post-Civil-War-London poem (*Annus Mirabilis*), which could have been a “training manual [Übungsatlas]” in Walter Benjamin’s properly cartographic and military term,<sup>37</sup> but, eventually, the “scheme” was lost in the process of its sprawling over and replaced by the mechanical framework of the Biblico-Arthurian myth, so that “[w]hat survived was a form

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<sup>35</sup> See Kenner, “The Urban Apocalypse” (1972); Smith, “The Making of *The Waste Land*” (1972); Gordon, “Dating *The Waste Land* Fragments” (1977; Appendix to her *Eliot*), among others.

<sup>36</sup> Rainey, “With Automatic Hand: Writing *the Waste Land*” (*Revisiting* 1-70); see also his Introduction to *Annotated* 1-44.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. “The photographer [August Sander] did not approach this enormous undertaking as a scholar, or with the advice of ethnographers and sociologists, but, as the publisher says, ‘from direct observation’. It was assuredly a very impartial, indeed bold sort of observation, but delicate too, very much in the spirit of Goethe’s remark: ‘There is a delicate empiricism which so intimately involves itself with the object that it becomes true theory’. . . . Sander’s work is more than a picture book. It is a training manual [Übungsatlas]” (Benjamin, “Little History of Photography” (1931); *Selected II* 520).

with no form, and a genre with no name” (Kenner “Urban” 47). I still believe, with certain *poetic* justice, that such a virtual chronology is *real*, if not as regards the composition of those particular typescripts extant, but in terms of their *conception*.

In any case, I agree with Michael North, who is faithful to Kenner’s thesis, that the above-cited, eventually-suppressed fragment “serves as a remarkably compact introduction to the entire poem” (*Political* 94) – not because, as North argues, “[t]he passage portrays a kind of post-Kantian hell where humanity is fastened by iron links to empirical facts and is also shadowed by immaterial forms” (95), but precisely because this and the following stanza (portraying “phantasmal gnomes” as Gerontion incarnates) could be a portrait of Negro-Spinozian “*multitudo*” (*mutatis mutandis*: “Vibrates in common to its *ontological* destiny”), which is, significantly and indeed *symptomatically*, immediately negated – hence, doubly suppressed, as it were – by the ensuing line that finishes the whole (suppressed) section:

Glaucou  
Not here, O ~~Adeimantus~~, but in another world.  
(WLF 31)

The note to this line by the editor of *The Original Draft* is very suggestive – not only of the note Eliot himself might have added if this line had survived Pound’s “caesarian operation”, but also of Eliot’s take on the City of God:

Adeimantus and Glaucou, brothers of Plato, were two of the interlocutors in *The Republic*. Appalled by his vision of the ‘Unreal City’, Eliot may be alluding to the passage (Book IX. 592 A-B) which inspired the idea of the City of God among Stoics and Christians, and found its finest exponent in St. Augustine:

“I understand,” he [Glaucou] said: “you mean the city whose establishment we have described, the city whose home is in the ideal; for I think that it can



be found nowhere on earth.” “Well,” said I [Socrates], “perhaps there is a pattern of it laid up in heaven for him who wishes to contemplate it and so beholding to constitute himself its citizen. . .” (Loeb)

(Editorial Notes; *WLF* 127-8)

The word “pattern” (The original Greek is “*paradeigma*”) here is of great significance. When Eliot’s *idea* of Empire has been consolidated, through his cultural politics during the 1930’s and especially after reading Theodor Haecker’s *Virgil: Father of the West* (English translation in 1934),<sup>38</sup> into a single figure of the Roman Empire (or, rather, what Virgil *represented* as the Roman Empire in the Latin language),<sup>39</sup> Eliot regards the Roman Empire as a “larger pattern”:

No modern language could aspire to the universality of Latin, even though it came to be spoken by millions more than ever spoke Latin, and even though it came to be the universal means of communication between peoples of all tongues and cultures. No modern language can hope to produce a classic, in the sense in which I have called Virgil a classic. Our classic, the classic of all Europe, is Virgil. In our several literatures, we have much wealth of which to boast, to which Latin has nothing to compare; but each literature has its greatness, not in isolation, but because of its place in a larger pattern, a pattern set in Rome.

(“What is a Classic?” (1944); *OPP* 70)

The “pattern” had been set in Rome and was “translated” (*translatio imperii et studii*) to the Holy Roman Empire – hence, Eliot’s odd proclamation in 1923: “I am all for empires, especially the Austro-Hungarian empire” (See Chapter 5 below).

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<sup>38</sup> See Ziolkowski *Virgil* and Reeves *Virgilian*.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. “[as a school boy] I instinctively preferred the *world* of Virgil to the *world* of Homer – because it was a more civilized world of dignity, reason and order. When I say ‘the world of Virgil’, I mean what Virgil himself made of the world in which he lived” (“Virgil and the Christian World” *OPP* 124); “The Roman Empire and the Latin language were not any empire and any language, but an empire and a language with a unique destiny in relation to ourselves” (“What is a Classic?” *OPP* 68).

In short, Empire is, for Eliot, a “pattern” without whose mediation no particular being (such as a poet or a modern nation) can realize its “unique destiny”<sup>40</sup> – in other words, Empire, like “Tradition”, gives particular beings their unique significance by allocating a proper “place” to each of them – and this proper place is never singular, never “beside itself”, as the etymology of *para-deigma* suggests.<sup>41</sup> Empire, like the City of God, “can be found nowhere on earth”, not because it is an un-mediated, immanent “non-place” that “no longer has a *determinate place*” and “can no longer be localized and quantified” (*Empire* 209), but simply because it is a transcendent mediator required by those who crave for mediation – “laid up in heaven for him who wishes to contemplate it”.<sup>42</sup>

To sum up, the Negri connection as regards “Spinoza *and* Empire” is, in Eliot’s case, more apparent than real, in that their “Spinozas” in question – *TdIE* and *E* I-II for Eliot; *E* III-IV, *TTP* and *TP* for Negri – are materially different, while their “Empires” – the mediating “pattern” laid up in heaven for Eliot; the un-mediated “non-place” of exploitation on earth for Negri – are same only for namesake. It seems, therefore, safe to maintain that there is really no common ground for comparison between these two.

Poetry plays but a *minor* role in this thesis – “minor” not only in the ordinary sense that it occupies only a small part in quantity, but also in the Deleuzo-Guattarian sense: “Use

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. “The Roman Empire and the Latin language were not any empire and any language, but an empire and a language with a unique destiny in relation to ourselves; and the poet in whom that Empire and that language came to consciousness and expression is a poet of unique destiny” (“Classic” *OPP* 68).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. “Neither particular nor universal, the example is a singular object that presents itself as such, that *shows* its singularity. Hence the pregnancy of the Greek term, for example: *para-deigma*, that which is shown alongside (like the German *Bei-spiel*, that which plays alongside). Hence the proper place of the example is always beside itself, in the empty space in which its undefinable and unforgettable life unfolds” (Agamben *Coming* 10). See also his *Homo Sacer* (22) for its connection to the logic of sovereignty.

<sup>42</sup> It is, in fact, highly probable that Eliot actually had in mind this particular passage in Plato’s *Republic* in this particular translation (Loeb), when he talked of Empire. Read the following passage from his “Rudyard Kipling” (1941): “But at the same time [Kipling’s] vision takes a larger view, and he sees the Roman Empire and the place of England in it. The vision is almost that of an idea of empire laid up in heaven” (*OPP* 245).

the minor language to *send* the major language *racing* [*faire filer*]" (*Thousand* 105); "But a minor, or revolutionary, literature begins by expressing itself and doesn't conceptualize until afterward . . . Expression must break forms, encourage ruptures and new sproutings" (*Kafka* 28). In other words, while the *major* part of this thesis tends, by the nature of academic dissertation, towards conceptualization and generalization (i.e., "systematic reading"), Poetry sporadically erupts onto the surface of the text and functions as "affective reading", resisting an *organic* whole (Theory, Order, Meaning, etc.) by virtue of *orgiastic* mis/readings and letting loose the *other* order, "the vital order", that produces rhizomic shoots and sprouts here and there – "It [Ça] represents nothing, but it produces. It means nothing, but it works [fonctionne]. Desire makes its entry with the general collapse of the question 'What does it mean?'" (*Anti-Oedipus* 109) – in short, Poetry functions in this thesis like the *scholia* in Spinoza's *Ethics*. Read, for example [*para-deigma*], this early fragment Eliot wrote in his notebook in March 1911:

He said: this universe is very clever  
 The scientists have laid it out on paper  
 Each atom goes on working out its law, and never  
 Can cut an unintentioned caper.

He said: it is a geometric net  
 And in the middle, like a syphilitic spider  
 The Absolute sits waiting, till we get  
 All tangled up and end ourselves inside her.

(*IMH* 71)

The editor of *Inventions of the March Hare* has done truly admirable service to Eliot studies not only by editing Eliot's hitherto-unpublished notebook so professionally, but also by providing it with such abundance of annotations. In the note to "spider / The Absolute", he identifies "The Absolute" in this fragment as "Bergson's Absolute more than Bradley's"

and quotes Eliot's 1934 recollection of Paris "during the first decade and more of this century": "and over all swung the spider-like figure of Bergson" (*IMH* 248). As we will see in Chapter 2 below, Eliot attended Bergson's Friday lectures on "Personality" at the Collège de France from January to February in 1911 – *at least* – and so it seems more than natural to assume that Eliot is here talking of Bergson, especially his doctrine of the two orders, i.e., "the geometric order" and "the vital order" – in fact, the third line has a variant, which clearly rings Bergsonian: "Each atom has its Place in Life" (*IMH* 71). And yet, what is this uncanny adjective "syphilitic" – sexual, infectious, mortal? Bergson seems to have nothing to do with syphilis. Who is a "syphilitic philosopher"? Nietzsche?

Of Nietzsche and Spinoza, Sarah Kofman writes:

Spinoza's geometrical order is in the last resort an arachnidan one. (Nietzsche is playing here on the phonetic analogy between *Spinne* and Spinoza.) The architecture of the concepts is assimilated to the network of a spider's web, for it has to be at the same time fine enough to be transported with the streams on which it rests and solid enough not to be dispersed by the lightest wind. Furthermore the analogy highlights the fact that the concepts are constructed from man himself just as the spider creates its web from its own substance. (*Nietzsche* 69)

The description of the spider's web in this passage, in passing, somehow reminds me of Bergson's description of Spinoza's *Ethics* ("something subtle, very light and almost airy, which flees at one's approach . . .") in his lecture at the Bologna Congress on May 10<sup>th</sup> 1911, which does, without doubt, reflect his *Saturday* lectures on Spinoza in the same year. . . . But we will come back to it later, so let us follow Kofman, who then refers to §17 of *The Antichrist*:

[God's] universal empire is now as ever a netherworld empire, an infirmary, a subterranean empire, a ghetto-empire . . . . And he himself is so pale, so weak, so decadent. . . . Even the palest of the pale were able to master him – our

friends the metaphysicians, those albinos of thought. They spun their webs around him so long that ultimately he was hypnotised by their movements and himself became a spider, a metaphysician. Thenceforward he once more began spinning the world out of his inner being – *sub specie Spinozæ*, – thenceforward he transfigured himself into something ever thinner and ever more anæmic, became “ideal,” became “pure spirit,” became “*absolutum*,” and “thing-in-itself.” . . . *The decline and fall of a god*: God became the “thing-in-itself.” (Nietzsche *Antichrist* 145-146; Nietzsche’s ellipses)

Syphilitic Nietzsche – Spinoza the Spider – the *female* Absolute, who, rather erotically, tangles us up, so “we end ourselves inside *her*”. On one hand, there is this “geometric” and “clever” universe of “He said”, where each “atom” is an embodiment of the Apollonian “law” and vigilant against a Dionysian “unintentioned caper”. On the other hand and “in the middle” of this ordered universe that comprises of the “systematic” Male enunciation, the “syphilitic” she-spider – a.k.a. the Absolute, or God, or Nature (she!) – silently “sits waiting” like a whore, waiting to devour us. In “Gerontion”, Nature, disguised as History, enters the stage again as a whore (“She gives when our attention is distracted . . .”), and so do “the spider”, now “suspend[ing] its operation”, and the “atoms”, now “fractured”. We will soon see that “Gerontion” will play a superb role – a superbly *minor* role – in this show.

## **Chapter One**

### **“falls in love, or reads Spinoza”**

When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.

--- T. S. Eliot, “The Metaphysical Poets” (1921)

### **The Glaring Absence**

The name of Spinoza is scarcely heard in Eliot studies. In fact, the well-known passage quoted above, which neatly describes the ordinary man suffering from the so-called “dissociation of sensibility”, is quite often the only chance for Spinoza to secure his entry in the Indices – or often not. For instance, M. A. R. Habib's *The Early T. S. Eliot and Western Philosophy* (1999), promising as the title may be, does not contain any discussion of Spinoza at all, only to quote the above passage without feeling the need to indicate the name of Spinoza in her Index. Such is usually the case among many other projects ostensibly devoted to the “philosophical Eliot” in general (e.g. Thompson (1963); Gray (1982); Skaff (1986); Shusterman (1988); Jain (1992); Brooker (1994); Childs (2001)), as well as the special issue, “T. S. Eliot and Philosophy”, of *The Modern Schoolman* (Nov.

1995). Also, most of the recent anthologies (e.g. Brooker, ed. (2001)) and companions (e.g. Moody, ed. (1994); Murphy (2007); Harding, ed. (2011)) rarely fail to give a section to the topic of Eliot and Philosophy, but never let Spinoza play the slightest role in their overviews. In fact, Childs' comprehensive survey on the "critical reception of Eliot's early work in philosophy" in the Introduction to his *From Philosophy to Poetry*, together with the earlier, more acerbic but no less comprehensive one made by Canary (1982), can be said to leave no work on this subject unmentioned (though they deal only with works written in English and published before 2001), and yet, here again the name of Spinoza won't be found – not a single time.<sup>43</sup>

With all the glaring absence of Spinoza in recent Eliot studies, however, it is interesting to find that Herbert Howarth's *Notes on Some Figures Behind T. S. Eliot* (1964), one of the earliest sourcebooks but still authoritative, makes such a suggestive, albeit unfounded, comment: "[Santayana] had been most influenced by Spinoza, and of him he spoke and wrote with the most glowing feeling. Possibly some of T. S. Eliot's very appreciative references to Spinoza look back to Santayana's teaching or to reading done under his inspiration" (84). Indeed, it might possibly be the case that, if we turned back the clock, the name of Spinoza would resurface in appreciations of T. S. Eliot. For instance, one of the very first appreciations of *The Waste Land*, which was, in fact, published in the same number of the *Dial* (Nov. 1922) that introduced *The Waste Land* to the American audience for the first time, and written by the journal's managing editor and another Harvard graduate, Gilbert Seldes, reads as follows:

Until I had read *The Waste Land* by Mr Eliot I believed that Ulysses was the only complete expression of the spirit which will be "modern" for the next

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<sup>43</sup> One notable exception is Lewis Freed, *T. S. Eliot: The Critic as Philosopher* (1979). Freed suggests, but does not elaborate, a possible Aristotle – Spinoza – Bradley connection (29-30), with Harold H. Joachim as a kind of pivot. This suggestion, if developed, should probably be oriented in the same direction as my argument below.

generation. . . . I have indicated how it differs from the Nineties, in its attitude towards its own disillusion; it differs more, I venture, in having no faith and in believing, more or less consciously, that no faith is possible, in wanting very much not to be called upon to make the effort to have faith. It is as sceptical of ideals (directions, “ends,”) as Spinoza; it may recover from its *détraquement* sufficiently to understand the competition between its own interests and passions and by recognizing their relations arrive at what Mr Santayana terms the life of Reason. That infinite intellectual love which God has for himself, according to Spinoza, is perhaps the last remaining contact of this age with what is divine.

(“Nineties – Twenties – Thirties” 577)

This sense of Spinoza’s philosophy as “the last remaining contact of this age with what is divine” may have long been lost, but the volcanic revival of Spinoza in contemporary Theory seems to call for a renewed “contact” with Spinoza in Eliot / Eliot in Spinoza – and the contact zone lies in wait in the Library.

King’s College, Cambridge, houses books and other printed materials from T. S. Eliot’s library (22 volumes and 9 envelopes), most of which carry Eliot’s underlines and annotations. Eliot entrusted them, among others, to his confidant and one-time flatmate, John Davy Hayward, who, in turn, bequeathed his “Archives” to his alma mater.<sup>44</sup> One of those books is the first volume of Spinoza’s *Opera*, edited by J. van Vloten and J. P. N. Land in 1882-3, which was the definitive Latin edition until the Gebhardt edition came to life in 1925.<sup>45</sup> The copy Eliot owned is the second edition (1895),<sup>46</sup> and contains *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* [hereafter, *TdIE*], *Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata* [hereafter, *E*], *Tractatus Politicus* and *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. There

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<sup>44</sup> “Eliot was a lonely man, and Hayward was the only single person he knew with whom he could share a flat. Solitude one can endure; mundane loneliness is more difficult to bear. Hayward was also a dutiful editor and keeper of the Eliot ‘Archives’, as his work on *Four Quartets* showed, and in addition his role was that of a social bulwark” (Ackroyd 275).

<sup>45</sup> For the textual history of Spinoza’s *Ethics*, see Steenbakkers “Textual”.

<sup>46</sup> Santayana owned a copy of the same edition and left some marginalia. See McCormick et al. (eds.) *George Santayana’s Marginalia*.



are a number of underlines on the text and annotations in the margins, apparently all in one hand,<sup>47</sup> of *TdIE* and *E*, but the pages of the rest are left uncut. On the front page is a penciled comment on, or rather critique of, Spinoza, written in French.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no definitive evidence that establishes the exact dates of Eliot's working on this particular copy. Since it is the second edition (1895) and not the third (1914), it is likely that the book was at least bought in or before 1914, and presumably read at least before "the monumental critical edition of Carl Gebhardt" (Steenbkkers 41) was published in 1925. There is another circumstantial evidence: in August 1920, Eliot's mother sent him the "List of Books, the property of Thomas Stearns Eliot" when she moved from St Louis to Cambridge, Massachusetts, so that she could send to her son in London the books he wanted with him (*LI* 486-7). The fact that this lengthy list does not include Spinoza's *Opera* seems to suggest that Eliot either owned the book in America and carried it to Europe, or purchased it on or after his arrival in Europe in July, 1914. Of course, it is still possible that the book was sent to him between his arrival in Europe and the date of his mother's letter, but, considering the fact that the First World War even prevented Eliot from sailing back to New England to take his viva (hence, no PhD degree awarded) and also that the Eliot family had, all through these years, been expecting him to eventually return and take up an academic position at Harvard, it seems highly unlikely that he had this particular copy sent to him during that period. In fact, the most solid evidence is "Mk 14.50", handwritten in pencil at the top right corner of the front cover paste-down.<sup>48</sup> This no doubt indicates the price of the book – 14.50 German Mark (approx. \$60). In all likelihood, then, Eliot bought this book in Marburg, where he stayed during the summer of 1914 in order to attend the summer school at Marburg University,

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<sup>47</sup> As I have perused many manuscripts of Eliot both in King's Archive Centre and Houghton Library, I have no doubt as to authenticity of those annotations by Eliot's own hand. Besides, considering the fact that Hayward regarded, from the beginning, those materials as the "Archives", it is most unlikely that there is any other hand than Eliot's.

<sup>48</sup> I greatly thank Dr. Patricia McGuire, archivist at King's College, Cambridge, for providing me with this indispensable information.

before starting his year at Oxford.<sup>49</sup> Although his stay was abruptly cut short by Germany's declaration of war, he had at least bought a copy of Edmund Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* and begun studying it in Marburg.<sup>50</sup> It is not hard to imagine that a young American student, fresh from Harvard and bound for Oxford to study Philosophy, strolled around the streets of the renowned German university town and bought a couple of foreign philosophy books, which he must have found very reasonable, compared with their prices at home. There was certainly no time to study those books, as he soon had to go through the "adventures" – escaping from Marburg at the wake of war, through Frankfurt and Rotterdam, up to London and then Oxford.<sup>51</sup> But there is no reason to doubt that Eliot carried or sent the copy of Spinoza's *Opera* that he had just purchased in Marburg, to England, where he was to study it carefully with a pencil in his hand.

It goes without saying that, as a student of Philosophy at Harvard, Eliot was certainly familiar with some of Spinoza's works. The above-quoted comment by Howarth as to Eliot's possible "reading [of Spinoza] done under [Santayana's] inspiration" (84) is fair enough, but that does not mean that Eliot as an undergraduate worked on the original Latin text. Instead, his encounter with Spinoza was most likely in English translation. In fact, his annotations in the copy at King's Archive strongly suggest that he had an English translation on one side while perusing the Latin text. In five places in *TdIE* and two places in *E*, Eliot underlines a word or a phrase and writes its English translation in the

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<sup>49</sup> According to Sencourt, Harvard Philosophy Department "insisted that [Eliot] should attend lectures by Rudolf Eucken at Marburg University" (39).

<sup>50</sup> In his letter to Conrad Aiken (from Marburg; July 25<sup>th</sup> 1914), Eliot wrote: "I am working up my Greek, mornings, and read *Logische Untersuchungen* [*sic.*] evenings" (*LI* 49). According to the editor's note to this passage, Eliot's annotated copy of the 1913 edition, inscribed 'T. S. Eliot / Marburg 1914', is in the London Library.

<sup>51</sup> Eliot's itinerary during the summer of 1914 is very complicated: as a Sheldon Travelling Fellow in Philosophy, he left America in July and first passed through London on his way to Marburg, where he was to attend the summer school. And yet, due to Germany's declaration of war on August 1<sup>st</sup>, the course was immediately cancelled, and Eliot, with several of his fellow Americans, escaped wartime Germany and arrived in London in mid-August. Eliot sojourned in London for a while, where he met Ezra Pound for the first time, and then was finally settled in Oxford in October. The details of his "adventures" are vividly described in a letter to his mother dated 23 August 1914 (*LI* 55-58).

margins. In fact, at one point (a footnote to Paragraph 32 of *TdIE*) he specifically writes, “translation gives ‘not caused’”. In the 1910’s, there were two widely available English translations that contained both *TdIE* and *E* – the 1901 Elwes translation (reprint of Vol. 2 of *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza* (1883-4)) and the 1910 Boyle translation (Everyman’s Library).<sup>52</sup> The English translations given by Eliot coincide with those of Boyle in all these seven places, but differ from the Elwes’ in two. It is therefore safe to conclude that Eliot was using the 1910 Boyle translation [hereafter, I quote from this translation, unless otherwise noticed]. It is indeed quite natural that Eliot was carrying this portable Everyman Library, rather than a bulky Elwes, with him.

### **George Santayana and Josiah Royce at Harvard**

Besides, the Introduction to this Everyman Library edition is written by no other person than George Santayana, whose courses, “History of Modern Philosophy” (Spring 1908) and “Ideals of Society, Religion, Art and Science in their historical development” (1909-1910), Eliot had just taken (Howarth 84). The former is a survey course, sequel to G. H. Palmer’s on Ancient Philosophy (Fall 1907), and the latter is, according to George Whiteside, “on [Santayana’s] book *The Life of Reason*” (“Doctoral” 83). There is a lecture note, entitled by Santayana a “System in Lectures” and compiled by Daniel Cory, of “a course of lectures [Santayana] first gave at Harvard in 1909-1910”, whose lectures are, according to Cory, listed in the departmental pamphlets as “22, *Metaphysics: The Order of Knowledge and the Order of Nature*. Lectures, theses, and private reading. MWF, 11:00” (“System” 626). At first sight, the title given by Howarth and that listed in the departmental pamphlets do not appear to refer to the same course – Howarth may perhaps have mistaken the subtitle of the former survey course for the latter advanced course – but

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<sup>52</sup> For the bibliography of Spinoza in English, see Boucher.

the “List of Assigned Reading” attached to the “System in Lectures” clearly shows that this lecture notes are for his “course on his book *The Life of Reason*”, which Eliot attended:

[List of Assigned Reading]

The Order of Knowledge

DESCARTES, *Discourse*, Ch. I-IV.

HUME, *Treatise*, Book I, Parts III & IV (pp.69-274).

SCHOPENHAUER, Book I (with additions to Book I).

*Life of Reason*, Vol. I, Ch. 1-3; Vol. V, Ch. 11.

*Essay*, Dec. 2nd. “On the limits of possible doubt and of rational doubt.”

The Order of Nature

< ESSENCE >

PLATO, *Parmenides*, 126-135 A. *Phaedrus*, 224-257 C. *Phaedo*, 84 B. 118 C.

*Republic*, 502 D, 521 C. *Timaeus*, 27 C, 30 C.

SPINOZA, *Ethics*, Book I, Prop. I-XI.

*Life of Reason*, Vol. I, Ch. 7, 8; Vol. V, Ch. 6, 7.

G. E. Moore, *On the Nature of Judgment. Mind*, Vol. 24, pp. 176-193

< MATTER >

LANGE’s *History of Materialism*.

DESCARTES’ *Discourse*, Ch. V, VI.

SPINOZA, Book I, Prop. XII – to the end of Book I.

J. S. Mill, Ex. of Sir W<sup>m</sup> Hamilton, Ch. XI.

*Life of Reason*, Vol. I, Ch. 4, 5; Vol. V, Ch. 3, 4.

< CONSCIOUSNESS >

ARISTOTLE, *De Anima*, Book II.

HOBBS, *Leviathan*, Ch. I-VII.

SPINOZA, *Ethics*, Part II.

W. K. CLIFFORD, *Essays on the Nature of Things-in-Themselves*.

*Life of Reason*, Vol. I, Ch. 6-9; Vol. V, Ch. 5.

(“System” 659)

Unfortunately, Cory’s compilation only includes “The Order of Knowledge”, because

Santayana did not wish to retain the latter part, “The Order of Nature”, which was apparently an embryonic form of “a brand new system”<sup>53</sup> that Santayana was incubating at the time Eliot attended his lectures. And yet, at least, the above list shows that the students were assigned Spinoza’s *Ethics* alongside with Santayana’s *Life of Reason*, Volume 1 [*Reason in Common Sense*], and Eliot was undoubtedly one of those students who read Spinoza’s *Ethics*, at least Books I & II, in this class as ancillary to understanding Santayana’s philosophy. That is perhaps why the oft-quoted disparaging comment Eliot made in a letter of 4 August 1920 (“I have never liked Santayana myself, because I have always felt that his attitude was essentially feminine,<sup>54</sup> and that his philosophy was a dressing up of himself rather than an interest in things”) is immediately followed by a sentence: “But still I think one ought to read *Reason in Common Sense* or one other volume” (LI 483).

There is then no doubt that Eliot’s early, if not earliest, exposure to Spinoza was undoubtedly directed by Santayana’s lectures on *The Life of Reason* in 1909-1910 as well as Santayana’s Introduction to the Boyle translation of Spinoza’s *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* and *Ethics*, published in 1910. In fact, Santayana goes, towards the end of his introductory chapter to *The Life of Reason*, so far as to insist that “[l]ittle or nothing would need to be changed in [Spinoza’s] system if the Life of Reason, in its higher ranges, were to be grafted upon it” (18), and references to Spinoza’s philosophy, both overt and covert, are easily detectable all through Santayana’s entire oeuvre. Indeed, Santayana’s “attachment to Spinoza” (1922 Preface to *The Life of Reason* 186) is so deep-rooted and long-standing that his very first publication was an essay, “The Ethical Doctrine of

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<sup>53</sup> “In the letter of May 16, 1911, [Santayana] writes to his sister Susana: ‘I am writing a brand new system of philosophy to be called ‘Three Realms of Being’ – not the mineral, vegetable and animal, but something far more metaphysical, namely, Essence, Matter and Consciousness.’ As is well known, this work later became *four* realms of being, Truth being added, and Consciousness changed to Spirit” (“System” 627).

<sup>54</sup> It is said that William James, who disliked his Spanish colleague and had once described his *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* as “the perfection of rottenness”, regarded *The Life of Reason* highly, calling it “manly” (Sprigge *Santayana* 14).

Spinoza”, published in *The Harvard Monthly* (June 1886) at the time of his graduation, while as late as 1944, in his autobiographical *Persons and Places*, Santayana still talked of “the many lessons that I learned in the study of Spinoza, lessons that in several respects laid the foundation of my philosophy” (233-4). Timothy Sprigge summarizes Santayana’s attachment to Spinoza in four points, among which the first seems particularly pertinent here: “As against all such idealist egotism [as German Idealism], Santayana called himself a naturalist, and it was as the greatest philosophical naturalist that he especially hailed Spinoza” (“Spinoza” 4). At the outset of *The Life of Reason*, Santayana makes this point clear:

One great modern philosopher, however, was free from these preconceptions [such as “trivial sanctimony in morals], and might have reconstituted the Life of Reason had he had a sufficient interest in culture. Spinoza brought man back into nature, and made him the nucleus of all moral values, showing how he may recognise his environment and how he may master it. (*Life* 18)

In his Introduction to the 1910 translation of Spinoza, Santayana elaborates the same point by calling Spinoza’s ethics “anthropology” – in a similar vein, Deleuze would call it “ethology” – that counters any idealistic / finalistic / moralistic lure:

one of [Spinoza’s] greatest achievements is the way in which he grafts his moral upon his natural philosophy. Every organic body endeavours to preserve itself. This endeavour is nothing arbitrary or miraculous; it is merely that equilibrium by which the organism is constituted – its vital inertia or (what is the same thing) its mechanical momentum. Such anthropology, although Spinoza calls it ethics, is a matter-of-fact record of the habits and passions of men. It is not the expression of any ideal; it does not specify any direction in which it demands that things should move. Yet it describes the situation which makes the existence of ideals possible and intelligible. (“Introduction” xiv-xv)

The rest of this paragraph can be read as a summary of *The Life of Reason* – how “the propulsive energy of life in any animal that is endowed with imagination” develops into “reason” – and its destination is identified with Spinoza’s “happiness”:

Reason thus establishes a sort of resigned and peaceful strength in the soul, founded on renunciation of what is impossible and cooperation with what is necessary. This resigned and peaceful strength Spinoza calls happiness; and since it rests on apprehension of the order of nature, and acceptance of it, he also calls it, in his pious language, knowledge and love of God. (xv)

Here we have a glimpse of the lost lecture notes on “The Order of Nature”. The destination of Santayana’s naturalism should be, I maintain, an ethological positivism in Spinozian manner<sup>55</sup> that radically wards off idealist illusions of subjectivism, moralism, and finalism, by completely apprehending and accepting “the order of nature”, while, at the same time, carefully evading the wasteland of scientific positivism, prevalent at that time, by appealing to Spinoza’s “pious language” – in short, “His radicalism was fervidly pious” (xvi).<sup>56</sup>

Despite his overt disparagement of Santayana’s “feminine” philosophy, its impact, if not a traceable influence, on the way in which Eliot is to construct and deconstruct his own philosophy is, I believe, deep and indeed, like the child’s desiring its mother, repressed. Santayana’s naturalism *à la* Spinoza seems to have deep affinity for what we have above called Eliot’s “strategic relativism” (i.e., the “attempt to occupy a middle ground between

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<sup>55</sup> As early as 1887, when he was still a graduate student, Santayana seems to have already reached such a philosophical standpoint: “Spinoza was the man I believed in always, as the alternative to Catholicism. And it is only in Spinoza’s manner that I am a positivist at all. I believe in the real world, in the world of thought and extension, of psychology and physics. God or substance with Spinoza equals reality; and this reality, which may have countless forms, we find only in space and in (other men’s) consciousness. I say in other men’s, because Spinoza was too sane to care to discuss anything from the point of view of subjective idealism” (Letter to Henry Ward Abbot, 17 Feb. 1887; qt. Sprigge “Spinoza” 6).

<sup>56</sup> Sprigge’s fourth point of affinity amounts to the same: “[Santayana’s] affinity to Spinoza [was] as one who was seeking to find a place for religious feeling in a naturalistic universe” (“Spinoza” 5).

idealism & realism”) at the core of his (anti-)philosophy by referring to his early critical study of Bergson and, above all, to his significant letter to Norbert Wiener, dated Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> 1915. It is, then, no accident that the name of Santayana appears, rather out of context, in the letter concerned:

I am quite ready to admit that the lesson of relativism is: to avoid philosophy and devote oneself to either *real* art or *real* science. (For philosophy is an unloved guest in either company). Still, this would be to draw a sharp line, and relativism preaches compromise. For *me*, as for Santayana, philosophy is chiefly literary criticism and conversation about life; and you have the logic, which seems to me of great value.<sup>57</sup> The only reason why relativism does not do away with philosophy altogether, after all, is that there is no such thing to abolish! (LI 88)

Earlier in the same letter, Eliot makes an unusually unequivocal statement as to his philosophical standpoint: “What it seems to me to lend itself to most naturally, is a relative materialism – or at least this is the way in which my sympathies incline” (LI 87). In these passages as well as the poems Eliot was writing around that time (i.e., *Prufrock and Other Observations*), it is not difficult to hear the echoes of Santayana’s appreciation of Lucretius in *Three Philosophical Poets* (1910), whose content most likely corresponds to his lectures<sup>58</sup> Eliot attended:

The materialist is primarily an observer; and he will probably be such in ethics also; that is, he will have no ethics, except the emotion produced upon him by the march of the world. If he is an *esprit fort* and really disinterested, he will love

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<sup>57</sup> There, in passing, an echo from Santayana’s lecture can be heard: “The only good system of philosophy is that of common sense and science: to write the *grammar of these* is the only logic” (“System” 649).

<sup>58</sup> “The present volume is composed, with a few additions, of six lectures read at Columbia University in February, 1910, and repeated in April of the same year, at the University of Wisconsin. These lectures, in turn, were based on a regular course which I had been giving for some time at Harvard College” (“Preface” to *Three Philosophical Poets* 5).



life . . . [Here, Santayana mentions “the ethical feeling of Spinoza, the greatest of modern naturalists in philosophy”] . . . There remains the genius of the poet himself. The greatest thing about this genius is its power of losing itself in its object, its impersonality. . . . Naturalism is a philosophy of observation, and of an imagination that extends the observable; all the sights and sounds of nature enter into it, and lend it their directness, pungency, and coercive stress. At the same time, naturalism is an intellectual philosophy; it divines substance behind appearance, continuity behind change, law behind fortune. It therefore attaches all those sights and sounds to a hidden background that connects and explains them. So understood, nature has depth as well as surface, force and necessity as well as sensuous variety. (36-39)

Eliot would certainly agree with Santayana’s materialist-naturalist philosophy and/or poetics “of observation” (“impersonality”), but whether or not he could heartily accept that “of imagination that extends the observable” is worth questioning, especially when Santayana, *à la* Spinoza, insists that naturalism “divines substance behind appearance” and speaks of “a hidden background”.

Indeed, as is often pointed out, Santayana’s materialist-naturalist poetics is no doubt one of the major sources for Eliot’s more famous poetics. Most notably, Eliot’s “objective correlative”<sup>59</sup> is, according to Philip Blair Rice, a term Eliot “may very well have adapted from Santayana’s better one” (271) – obviously from Santayana’s “The Element and Function in Poetry”: “The substance of poetry is, after all, emotion . . . The thrilling adventures which he craves demand an appropriate theatre; the glorious emotions with which he bubbles over must at all hazards find or feign their correlative objects” (*Interpretations* 165). The striking similarity here is, however, not only in terminology, but in the very mechanism of poetic creation: “the link that binds together the ideas,

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<sup>59</sup> Eliot’s critical terms are, needless to say, as much objects of (often futile) source-hunting as his poems. As for various possible sources for “objective correlative”, see Stallman *Critic’s* 116-174, to which I would only add Nietzsche’s “*adäquate Objectivation*” in *The Birth of Tragedy*, pointed out by F. N. Lees, as a possible (but not probable) Spinozist incarnation.

sometimes so wide apart, which his wit assimilates, is most often the link of emotion. . . . The poet's art is to a great extent the art of *intensifying emotions* by assembling the scattered objects that naturally arouse them. . . . By this union of disparate things having a common overtone of feeling, the feeling is itself *evoked* in all its strength; nay, it is often created for the first time" (157-8; my emphasis). In addition, the similarities can also be found in the way critiques are made: for instance, Santayana criticizes several passages in Shelley's "Revolt of Islam" and Keats' "Endymion" for not containing any "definite meaning" but only "a kind of objectless passion" (154). Furthermore, he makes a Spinoza-like critique of "pathetic fallacy": "We dye the world of our own colour; by a pathetic fallacy, by a false projection of sentiment, *we soak Nature with our own feeling*, and then celebrate her tender sympathy with our moral being. . . . There would be need of a force of intellect which poets rarely possess to rationalize their inspiration without diminishing its volume" (158; my emphasis). It is easy to find many quotations from Eliot's early critical prose that correspond with each of the above passages.

What is even more interesting than these obvious similarities is, however, a kind of "break" that Santayana makes towards the end of the above essay, which categorically differentiates his poetics from Eliot's. In the last pages, Santayana abruptly leaps at the "highest" (i.e., "fourth"<sup>60</sup>) stage of poetry, introducing "a cosmic order" and "harmonies" and speeding up his argument thus: "The highest ideality is the comprehension of the real" (284); "The highest poetry, then, is not that of the versifiers, but that of the prophets" (284); "That the intuitions of religion are poetical, and that in such intuitions poetry has its ultimate function, are truths of which both religion and poetry become more conscious the more they advance in refinement and profundity" (285); and, finally, poetry "is religion

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<sup>60</sup> Santayana's four stages of poetry are: (1: low) mere sound and virtuosity; (2: intermediate) fancy, observation, passion; (3: high) creative reason; and finally (4: highest) intuition. This scheme has a significant parallel with Spinoza's "Three Kinds of Knowledge": (1) *opinio* or *imaginatio* (2) *ratio* (3) *scientia intuitiva* [intuitive knowledge]. "Three Kinds" have, in fact, been four stages in his earlier *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* (para. 19).

without practical efficacy and without metaphysical illusion” (289). This leap at the “fourth stage” of poetry (i.e., “intuition”) is, I believe, heavily indebted to Spinoza’s “Third Kind of Knowledge” (i.e., *scientia intuitiva*), which brings about a similar “break” in Part V of the *Ethics*. Eliot’s tendency to “halt at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism” (SW 59) would certainly prevent him from making such a leap in poetics as well as in philosophy, and yet, as we will discuss towards the end of Chapter Four, this very *Verbot* would drive him into giving up Philosophy for Poetry so as to make a “closer contact” with what Santayana above calls “a hidden background” – i.e., the *Real*, the *Virtual*. In any case, it seems fair to suggest that there may exist, at the core of Eliot’s philosophizing and, possibly, of his eventual abandonment of philosophy for “*real art*”, a deep undercurrent of Santayana’s materialist-naturalist philosophy and/or poetics, and, by extension, an even deeper, almost unfathomable, undercurrent of “the ethical feeling of Spinoza, the greatest of modern naturalists in philosophy” *via* Santayana.

After he took those courses with Santayana, Eliot graduated from Harvard College in June 1910, spent a “romantic year” in Paris, and in October 1911 returned to the Graduate School to read for a doctorate in Philosophy. Here began the well-known “[t]wo years spent in the study of Sanskrit under Charles Lanman, and a year in the mazes of Patanjali’s metaphysics under the guidance of James Woods”, which left him “in a state of enlightened mystification” (ASG 40). Less known is the fact that Eliot, besides his intensive Indic studies, took such general courses as George Herbert Palmer’s “Ethics” (Fall 1911 ~ Spring 1912) and George Plimpton Adams’ “Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz” (Spring 1912), not to mention the celebrated names such as Rudolf Eucken and Hugo Münsterberg, until he finally came to focus on F. H. Bradley in the summer of 1913. In his final year at Harvard (Fall 1913 and Spring 1914), he attended the seminars with Josiah Royce on Logic, R. F. A. Hoernlé on Metaphysics (U of Durham), Anesaki Masaharu on Buddhism (U of Tokyo), and Ralph Barton Perry on Ethics, as well as the Lowell Lectures by Bertrand Russell.

During these years at Harvard Graduate School, which Santayana had already left for Europe for good, the dominant figure of Josiah Royce, whom Eliot was later to call “the *doyen* of American philosophers” (KE 10), was an overwhelming influence upon anyone present. Unlike the case of Santayana, it may be rather farfetched to find any Spinoza connection in Royce’s philosophy, but it is perhaps of certain episodic interest that Royce, fresh from California, surprised the Harvard audience of his lectures, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (1892), by beginning the history of modern philosophy with Spinoza, rather than Descartes. Of course, Royce himself understood how unconventional, if not entirely unacceptable, his choice was, so he added in his preface:

The traditional beginning of the story of modern thought with the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* I have not employed, because it is almost universal in the text-books, and because, meanwhile, in its usual context, it produces, despite its literal accuracy, a very misleading impression. The seventeenth century was not on the whole a period of subjectivism, but the very reverse. Descartes was himself best known to his contemporaries, not for his theory of knowledge, but for his physical and metaphysical system. Of the philosophical Absolutism of the century Spinoza is meanwhile the best, because the extremest representative. Interested as I here am in the broad outlines and not in the details, I have, therefore, chosen to illustrate the general attitude of the time towards the deepest problems of the spirit by this extreme but still typical case of Spinoza, and to leave the rest to a brief general sketch. (*Spirit* xiv-xv)

Here is Spinoza as “the extremest representative” of “philosophical Absolutism”. Royce also refers to Spinoza’s “philosophical religion” (41), and depicts it, in a rather unexpected move, as the crux of what he calls “the first period” (i.e., “Period of Naturalism and of Rationalism”) of modern philosophy. Unlike Santayana, who emphasizes the significance of Spinoza’s being Jewish and “doubly an outcast” (“Introduction” ix), Royce places Spinoza at the very center, indeed the beginning, of modern European philosophy, and even

compares, quite extensively, Spinoza's "philosophical religion" with "the old and thoroughly orthodox devotional book called 'Imitation of Christ', [which] Spinoza, very probably, never read" (51). He then explicates "the essence of Spinoza's religion" thus:

He is not always, let me tell you, in his religious mood; and when he is not, he appears as a cynical observer of the vanity of mortal passions. But as a religious thinker, he is no cynic. Unswervingly he turns from the world of finite hopes and joys; patiently he renounces every sort of worldly comfort; even the virtue that he seeks is not the virtue of the active man. There is one good thing, and that is the Infinite; there is one wisdom, and that is to know God; there is one sort of true love, and that is the submissive love of the saintly onlooker, who in the solitude of reflection sees everywhere an all-pervading law, and all-conquering truth, a supreme and irresistible perfection. . . . The wise man transcends lamentation, ceases to love finite things, ceases therefore to long and to be weary, ceases to strive and to grow faint, offers no foolish service to God as a gift of his own, but possesses his own soul in knowing God, and therefore enters into the divine freedom, by reason of a clear vision of the supreme and necessary laws of the eternal world. (54-55)

Here, "the essence of Spinoza's religion" is closest to "acosmism", to use the term employed by Hegel – what Royce emphasizes is escape from and renunciation of the finite world and submission to the Infinite. Although Royce also attributes the title "naturalism and rationalism" to Spinoza, his Spinoza seems to stand at the opposite pole of Santayana's naturalist Spinoza, whose "happiness . . . rests on apprehension of the order of nature, and acceptance of it". In other words, Royce's Spinoza is not so much a naturalist or rationalist as an ascetic mystic at or beyond the "extremest" limit of naturalism and rationalism.<sup>61</sup> In a sense, Royce has, true to his background and discipline, seen in the

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<sup>61</sup> Ralph Barton Perry, another of Eliot's teachers at Harvard Philosophy, appreciates, in his Introduction to the 1955 reprint edition of *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, Royce's exposition of Spinoza's system as "a remarkable achievement requiring both a recognition of the mechanical system of nature and a mystical love of God" (v).

figure of Spinoza an attempt to overcome the scientific positivism of his time by appealing to “philosophical Absolutism” à la German Romanticism, which Santayana detested so much.

What is even more interesting is, however, his later development of this issue, especially in his magnum opus, *The World and the Individual* (first series, 1899). In a chapter entitled “The Unity of Being, and the Mystical Interpretation”, Royce makes a detailed study of the *Upanishads*,<sup>62</sup> only to identify the “Self of our Hindoo” with “Spinoza’s Eternal”, “Eckhart’s Stille Wüste”, “the One of Plotinus”, “the ‘Æonian music’” of Tennyson’s famous vision in the *In Memoriam*, and “the unspeakable happiness which Browning’s lover has vainly mourned”:

A Spinoza is the most merciless foe of the illusions of common sense. With ideas the mystic wars against all mere ideas. With the abstract weapons of Realism he refutes Realism. At last he believes himself to have won the right, by virtue of the very breath of his vision of finitude, to condemn, like Browning’s lover in the *Last Ride Together*, the whole of finitude. (177)

Now Spinoza’s renunciation of the finite world Royce has earlier found in the “spirit of modern philosophy” goes far beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries and is identified as a sort of universal mystical experience of ecstasy. Royce takes up this issue again in “Monotheism”, his contribution to the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (1916), in which he categorizes monotheism into three types and identifies “the third type of monotheism” as “Indic monotheism”, which “tends to insist not only upon the ‘sole reality of God,’ but upon the ‘unreality of the world’ . . . [and] tends to assert, ‘The One is God and God only, and is so precisely because the world is but appearance’,” giving examples of

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<sup>62</sup> In the preface, Royce thanks his colleague, Charles R. Lanman, for the translations of the passages from the *Upanishads*. Lanman was, of course, Eliot’s mentor in Indic studies, who gave his promising student a copy of the *Upanishads, the Twenty-Eight* by Vasudev Laxman Shastri Phansikar (Tukaram Javaji in Bombay, 1906) in May 1912.

Hindu philosophy (“often called ‘Hindu pantheism’”), Neo-Platonism, Spinoza, and Meister Eckhart (“Monotheism” 410). Interestingly enough, this time he adds to this list “the recent revival of such types of doctrine in various forms of ‘intuitionism’ and ‘anti-intellectualism’ in European thought”, which must no doubt have reminded the contemporary readers of Bergsonism.

As regards the issue of mystical experiences, it should not be irrelevant to refer to Eliot’s life-long obsession with St. John of the Cross.<sup>63</sup> Although Eliot’s use of the words of St. John of the Cross, almost *verbatim*, in *East Coker* (1940) is most well-known, his earlier use as one of the epigraphs to *Sweeney Agonistes* (1932) seems most pertinent in our context: “Hence the soul cannot be possessed of the divine union, until it has divested itself of the love of created beings” (CP 121). In response to his friend Bonamy Dobrée, who “regarded this [epigraph from St. John of the Cross] with horror”, Eliot explained, in a letter of 1936, the essence of what he has found in the dictum of St. John of the Cross:

The doctrine that in order to arrive at the love of God one must divest oneself of the love of created beings was thus expressed by St. John of the Cross, you know: i.e. a man who was writing primarily not for you and me, but for people seriously engaged in pursuing the Way of Contemplation. It is only to be read in relation to that Way: i.e. merely to kill one’s human affections will get one nowhere, it would be only to become rather more a completely living corpse than most people are. But the doctrine is fundamentally true, I believe. Or to put your belief in your own way, that only through the love of created beings can we approach the love of God, that I believe to be UNTRUE. Whether we mean by that domestic and friendly love of God, or a more comprehensive love of the “neighbour”, of humanity in general. I don’t think that ordinary human affections are capable of leading us to the love of God, but rather that the love of God is capable of informing, intensifying and elevating our human affections, which otherwise have

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<sup>63</sup> Eliot’s earlier reading of St. John of the Cross dates back at least to his Harvard days, as there is, among Eliot’s Harvard note-cards, a note on St John of the Cross, *The Dark Night of the Soul* (IMH 152).

little to distinguish them from the “natural” affections of animals. Try looking at it from that end of the glass! (qt. Dobrée “Eliot” 81)

Although Eliot here talks of St. John of the Cross, rather than Royce’s favorite Bernard of Cluny, and Eliot’s association is distinctively Buddhist (“the Way”), rather than with Royce’s “Hindoo sages”, Eliot’s explanation of St. John of the Cross’s mysticism is strikingly similar to Royce’s with regard to “the essence of Spinoza’s religion” or “Indic monotheism”, quoted above. It seems as though Eliot here took sides with the ascetic Spinoza of Royce (in the guise of the Spanish mystic), who “ceases to love finite things”, having utterly forsaken the naturalist Spinoza of Santayana, who would intuit Substance (God or Nature) through the very “love of created beings”. Has he really forsaken?

Of course, just as Dobrée would do, we cannot help reading the post-conversion (i.e., post-1928), dogmatic Eliot in those words, but the fact is that the epigraph concerned was already used when the “Fragment of a Prologue” (the first installment of what was to be named *Sweeney Agonistes*) was first published in the *New Criterion* (Oct. 1926) and again when the “Fragment of an Agon” (the second installment) was printed in the same journal (Jan. 1927), and that Eliot’s plan to write a Sweeney verse play as a post-Waste-Land breakthrough had been conceived for a long time, even before the publication of *The Waste Land*.<sup>64</sup> In fact, Eliot’s renewed interest in St. John of the Cross was most likely triggered by John Middleton Murry’s trenchant critique of the “inward contradiction between the profession of classical principles such as [Eliot’s] and the *content* of [*The Waste Land*]” – i.e., contradiction between his critical writings having “pro-classical velleities for order and clarity and decorum” and his creative writings being “disordered, obscure, indecorous” – in his significant essay, “The ‘Classical’ Revival” (*Adelphi*, Feb.-Mar. 1926), in which Murry

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<sup>64</sup> In the *Letters*, Vol. II, there is a mention of the forthcoming “jazz drama” as early as 23 August 1923 (*LII* 192) and in October 1924 Eliot discussed the draft with Arnold Bennett (Eliot’s letter to Bennett dated “11 Oct. 1923” (*LII* 250) should most likely have been sent on “11 Oct. 1924”). According to the editors of the *LII*, Virginia Woolf recorded Eliot’s plan to “write a verse play” in her diary (20 Sept. 1920).



compares and contrasts Eliot with St. John of the Cross:

The poem [i.e. *The Waste Land*] expresses a self-torturing and utter nihilism: there is nothing, nothing: nothing to say, nothing to do, nothing to believe, save to wait without belief for the miracle. . . . This is a voice from the Dark Night of the Soul of a St. John of the Cross – the barren and dry land where no water is.

To order such an experience on classical principles is almost beyond human powers. It might conceivably be done, by an act of violence, by joining the Catholic Church. St. John of the Cross *was* a Catholic. But the stupendous difference is that St. John of the Cross was born a Catholic, who thought and felt instinctively in the categories of the Church. Mr. Eliot was not; he was born into the same tormenting fluidity as the rest of us. (Murry “Classical” 227)

Murry’s prescience as to Eliot’s future conversion to Catholicism (“Anglo”-Catholic though it turns out to be) as a necessary solution to his “inward contradiction” is quite remarkable, factually as well as theoretically. Besides, this essay, which played a significant part in the then most fashionable debate between Classicism and Romanticism, is all the more remarkable for the fact that, as David Goldie has revealed, Eliot has read its typescript and given numerous comments and corrections – Eliot has blue-penciled it, as it were – before publication.<sup>65</sup> And the most interesting of all in our context is that Murry’s comparison of Eliot to St. John of the Cross did apparently hit Eliot’s sensitive nerve most. Almost exactly at the same time as Murry’s essay was published, Eliot was giving the Clark Lectures at Cambridge (Jan. 26 ~ March 9, 1926), to which prestigious lectureship he was, in fact, nominated by his predecessor, John Middleton Murry himself. In the third lecture (8 Feb.?), however, Eliot makes a riposte, rather out of context, to Murry:

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<sup>65</sup> Goldie’s *A Critical Difference* provides a plenty of essential facts and arguments with regard to the critical inter-relations between Eliot and Murry, which more or less formed the interwar London critical scenes, most notably the Classicism-Romanticism debate. As for “The ‘Classical’ Revival” in particular, see 154-162.

Incidentally, I think that if Mr. Middleton Murry would study carefully the works of St. John of the Cross, he would see that the parallel he draws between St. John and myself is quite illusory; for what St. John means by the “dark night” and what Mr. Murry means by my “dark night” are entirely different things. (VMP 104)

The context in which this rather unnecessary quip is uttered is that Eliot, in his typical dichotomizing method, insists on the sharp difference between “classical”, or “ontological”, mysticism (Aristotle, Richard of St. Victor, and Dante) and “romantic”, or “psychological”, mysticism (St. Ignatius, St. Theresa, St. John of the Cross, and Bergson). In that sense, it may be natural to assume that Eliot is here implying that *The Waste Land* belongs to “classical” mysticism, rather than “romantic” mysticism of St. John of the Cross. And yet, as Goldie’s study shows, Eliot has specifically denied the label of “classicism” to his poem, writing in the margin of the typescript of Murry’s essay: “no one ever said it was [classical]. ‘The Waste Land’ makes *no attempt whatever* to be ‘classical’” (qt. Goldie *Critical* 157).

Eliot’s equivocation is, as usual, quite confusing, but one conclusion we can perhaps draw from it is that the ascetic St. John in the 1936 letter to Dobrée (incarnate of Royce’s Spinoza) is distinct from the “romantic” St. John in the 1926 riposte to Murry. And the latter is, interestingly enough, associated with Santayana. The immediately following paragraph reads:

When Mr. George Santayana says that the mystic is the true epicurean, he is saying what is true of the Spanish mystic rather than and in distinction to any other. It is no accident, in this connection, that the town of Avila near Madrid has two great glories: that of having given birth to St. Theresa and that of having give birth to Mr. George Santayana of Cambridge, Massachusetts. And of the Spanish mystic, we can easily prove Mr. Santayana right. For does not St. John of the Cross say . . . (VMP 104)

So here is the Spanish mystic as a “true epicurean” à la Santayana. The editor of the

Clark Lecture gives a footnote here: “Santayana frequently discussed Epicurean detachment but had not made such an explicit statement in his published work; TSE may have heard him say it in class” (VMP 104; fn. 25). The editor then quotes a paragraph from *The Sense of Beauty* as a possible candidate for Eliot’s direct allusion. Since Eliot has introduced, at the very beginning of the whole lecture series, Santayana’s *Three Philosophical Poets* – “too little read, though one of the most brilliant of Mr. Santayana’s works” (VMP 48) – it should be more natural to surmise that the allusion here is made, at least from the audience’s point of view, to that “too little read” book, in which naturalist Lucretius (and, by analogy, Spinoza) is depicted as Epicurean *per excellence*. But it is true that there is no explicit statement to that effect, so I would also like to quote one passage – different from the one quoted by the editor of the Clark Lectures – from *The Sense of Beauty*:

The sense of the sublime is essentially mystical: it is the transcending of distinct perception in favour of a feeling of unity and volume. So in the moral sphere, we have the mutual canceling of the passions in the breast that includes them all, and their final subsidence beneath the glance that comprehends them. This is the Epicurean approach to detachment and perfection; it leads by systematic acceptance of instinct to the same goal which the stoic and the ascetic reach by systematic rejection of instinct. (*Sense* 243)

The two approaches of mystical detachment and perfection: naturalist Epicurean vs ascetic Stoic – the St. John of 1926 vs the St. John of 1936 – Santayana’s Spinoza vs Royce’s Spinoza. The former by way of “systematic acceptance of instinct” (ardent observation of Nature and divination of Substance behind appearance) and the latter by way of “systematic rejection of instinct” (renunciation of the finite world and submission to the Infinite), both attempt to solve the ultimate, ontological question of “Appearance” and “Reality” – the properly Bradleyan question with which Eliot has finally decided to struggle just before he leaves for Europe.

In this section, we have looked at two very different figures at Harvard Philosophy,<sup>66</sup> who immensely influenced Eliot's philosophy in its formative years, each in his own way. The conflicting images of Spinoza – the naturalist of Santayana versus the ascetic of Royce – were possibly submerged then, through their powerful teachings, deep in Eliot's own thought, or *ethos*. In that respect, it is rather interesting that, in one of the Houghton manuscripts, "The Relationship between Politics and Metaphysics" (ca. 1913-4), already cited above in our Introduction, Eliot emphasizes, in passing, a sort of omnipresence of the "personality" of a philosopher that "binds the various branches of his thought together with indissoluble and impalpable bonds", bringing up Santayana and Royce together in a provocative way:

The ethics of Mr. Santayana, for example, have literally no dependence upon his metaphysics. It might follow, I think, equally well from the metaphysics of Prof. Royce, if you are willing to abstract the closely worn Roycean philosophy to that extent. Similarly, it would be an interesting experiment in philosophical virtuosity to deduce the Roycean ethics from a materialistic system. But as a matter of fact you never find a pure ethics or a pure metaphysics in this sense; for every system – or at least every noteworthy system is shot through with the personality of its author, and this binds the various branches of his thought

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<sup>66</sup> One more name, though quite negligible in my opinion, should be mentioned here: George Plimpton Adams, a visiting professor from the University of California, whose lecture, "Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz", Eliot took in Spring 1912. It may be of some interest that Adams shares the common association of Spinoza and Buddhism as regards "freedom from the bondage of the emotions": "The psychological basis of this doctrine lies in a certain contrast and seeming incompatibility between contemplation and desire, clear insight and emotional activity. It is this tension which Spinoza seizes upon so profoundly in his doctrine of the manner in which man is to obtain freedom from the bondage of the emotions. It is another aspect of the same tension which Buddhism has used in its doctrine of the way to salvation from desire and the sorrows which inevitably accompany the vain striving of desire to find satisfaction. Now these motives and teachings are familiar ones" (*Idealism* 148). In this passage one may find Eliot's own "impersonal theory", but what seems significant here is not so much the possibility that Eliot may have learned the theory from Adam's lectures (which is very improbable), as the fact that such desire to "escape from emotions" and the Spinoza-Buddhist association in this regard were indeed "familiar" among Eliot's teachers and peers.

together with indissoluble and impalpable bonds. It is, in short, the personality of the author that makes the system true and presents it from being more than relatively true. (9)

This is a rather rough, almost vulgar, anti-theoretical – anti-“impersonal theory” for that matter – statement to hear from the President of the Philosophical Society of Harvard, so much so that it is quite revealing as to Eliot’s concerns with “the overwhelming question”, i.e., the ontological foundation, or the “originary” violence, underlying *any* metaphysical system, hence his eventual abandonment of Philosophy for Poetry. But, here, it suffices to say that whatever “influence” Eliot may have received from Santayana and/or Royce, it should be more *virtual-intensive* than *actual-extensive* – “the personality” rather than “the system”; ontological rather than metaphysical. It should not be an accident that, almost 40 years later, Eliot talks of “what [he] may call the ‘one-man’ philosophy: that is to say, a world view which was a projection of the personality of its author” – as an object of critique, of course, but adding that he “do[es] not wish to diminish the grandeur or the value of the greatest one-man philosophies” – and, on that occasion, his example is no other than Spinoza: “When such a philosophy is done superbly well, as by Spinoza, it retains a permanent importance for humanity: for an acquaintance with Spinoza, and a temporary submission to his influence, is an experience of great value” (Introduction to Pieper xvi). It is therefore safe to conclude that, although these submerged images of Spinoza presented by Santayana and Royce – both *ontological* in different ways – are never to emerge, overtly at least, in the marginalia of Eliot’s copy of Spinoza’s *Opera*, the insights and visions enveloped in them, together with certain *intensive* qualities of their personalities merging with each other’s and with Spinoza’s, do form, I believe, a sort of magmatic chamber deep down in his *ethos*, which makes sporadic eruptions on the surface of Eliot’s philosophical as well as poetical texts.

## **F. H. Bradley and H. H. Joachim at Merton**

As is to be discussed in detail in the following chapters, the marginalia in Eliot's copy of Spinoza's *Opera*, do not show any sign of violence, or barbarism, one would expect from the conflicting visions of the two Spinozas injected into young Eliot at Harvard. This observation seems to support, together with the above-mentioned evidences concerning references to the 1910 Boyle translation and probable purchase of the copy concerned at Marburg in the summer of 1914, my theory that Eliot worked, pencil in hand, on this Latin text during the year of studying at Merton College under Harold Joachim and/or the ensuing years of his dissertation writing. But, of course, such a theory is nothing but an unprovable speculation, and, even if proved, would not much matter. What really matters is not when Eliot actually worked on that particular book, but how he read it and what its close-reading meant for him. In that sense, it is perhaps best, after all, to listen to his own recollection:

I spent three years, when young, in the study of philosophy. What remains to me of these studies? The style of three philosophers. Bradley's English, Spinoza's Latin, and Plato's Greek. (*TCC*. 20-21)

This recollection was made in 1961, almost at the end of his long career – he had only 4 more years to live. It is significant that, in his mind almost half a century later, those three philosophers are associated together under “three years, when young, in the study of philosophy”. And, even more significantly, it is not their philosophy *per se*, but their languages and styles, which strongly suggests that what the aged poet recollects here is his youthful experience of close-reading those texts in their original languages. The name of Spinoza in this list may strike an Eliot scholar as irrelevant: s/he would certainly endorse Bradley as the most obvious choice and also Plato – though Aristotle might perhaps be

slightly more appropriate<sup>67</sup> – as understandable, but would probably wonder why Spinoza is chosen along with the other two. It is probably not because Spinoza's Latin is particularly superior,<sup>68</sup> but because Eliot's experiences of close-reading those three philosophers' original texts are charged with such high degrees of (almost physical) intensity and acute sense of contemporaneity that, after half a century, they are yoked in memory together.

These "three years" are not difficult to identify, as we know that Eliot bought a copy of Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* at Harvard Coop in June 1913 and finished writing his doctoral dissertation on Bradley in March<sup>69</sup> 1916. As Eliot was also enrolled in Josiah Royce's seminar in Fall 1913, his three years of "the study of [Western] philosophy" seems to have smoothly succeeded the two years of his Indic studies ("enlightened mystification").

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<sup>67</sup> At Merton College, Oxford, Eliot read the *Posterior Analytics* (and possibly some other pieces from the *Organon*) in Harold Joachim's tutoring, while attending his lecture on the *Nichomachean Ethics* and R. G. Collingwood's on *de Anima*. King's Archive holds a copy of Eliot's *de Anima*, "used in 1914-15 with notes made during R. G. Collingwood's *explication de texte*" – most of the notes are Latin translation of the Greek passages. Eliot, in his letter to J. H. Woods (28 Jan. 1915), also mentions, "For Joachim I am now writing papers on Plato" (LI 91). As for Eliot's knowledge of Plato and the Greek language in general, there is an interesting recollection by Brand Blanshard, who went to Oxford as a Rhodes scholar and met Eliot there: "I recall a conversation of fifty years ago in which the talk turned on Plato, and some of us compared notes with [Eliot] on how many dialogues we had read. He said he thought he had read them all. It was only later that I realized what he meant, namely that he had read them in Greek. I used to wonder occasionally how solid his Greek was. Many years later, at some dinner or other, I found myself sitting next to E. R. Dodds, Professor of Greek at Oxford. He would know if anyone did, and I ventured to put the question directly. The response was unqualified. Dodds had known Eliot as an undergraduate [at Oxford]; they had sat together in a tiny seminar of J. A. Stewart's on the *Enneads* of Plotinus, which is formidably knotty Greek, and Eliot could hold his own with the best of them" (635).

<sup>68</sup> I am no judge of Spinoza's Latin, but there are several negative remarks by the commentators with regard to Spinoza's Latin: for instance, Stuart Hampshire, one of the best-known commentators in English, calls it "an absurdly crabbed and inelegant Latin" (*Spinozism* vii). It is indeed interesting that Gilles Deleuze, one of the most avid readers of Spinoza in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, gives a twisted evaluation of Spinoza's "style": "[Spinoza] seems, on the face of it, to have no style at all, as we confront the very scholastic Latin of the *Ethics*. But you have to be careful with people who supposedly 'have no style'; as Proust noted, they're often the greatest stylists of all" (*Negotiations* 165).

<sup>69</sup> In Eliot's own recollection, the dissertation was completed in April 1916 (KE 9), but his letter to J. H. Woods, dated March 6<sup>th</sup> 1916, suggests that it had been completed at least by that date (LI 148). What matters here is, however, not the actual date but his recollection.

And, after his boat for America, scheduled to leave on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1916 and meant to bring Eliot to Harvard for his viva, was delayed due to the German submarine crisis, Eliot never really continued any serious work in philosophy, except for publishing two articles in the Leibniz Bicentennial issue of *The Monist* (Oct. 1916) by the good offices of Bertrand Russell. Given that Eliot's recollection is trustworthy as to his reading Spinoza, together with Plato and Bradley, during these three years, it seems, after all, safe to conclude that Eliot close-read Spinoza's *Opera*, with the Boyle translation on one side, most likely during the final phase of his "academic philosophizing"<sup>70</sup> in England, so that it is not so much under the influence of his Harvard luminaries as it is *somehow* connected to his dissertation on Bradley. So we must now investigate the Spinoza connection surrounding young Eliot at Merton, Oxford.

The key person in this connection is Harold H. Joachim, Eliot's tutor at Merton College, Oxford, and Bradley's disciple. According to Brand Blanshard, who knew all of these three personalities at Merton, Joachim is "a better scholar than Bradley, though not his equal as writer or thinker" ("Letters" 637). Indeed, Joachim's major philosophical monograph, *The Nature of Truth* (1906),<sup>71</sup> is barely remembered today, probably only among those analytic philosophers who are generally denunciatory of British Idealism, as the work that excited Bertrand Russell's important critique of monistic idealism, "The Monistic Theory of Truth" (1906-7), whereas his highly scholarly *explications de texte* of Spinoza's *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* and *Ethics* have often been referred to

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. "Forty-six years after my academic philosophizing came to an end, I find myself unable to think in the terminology of this essay" (*KE* 10) – this comment is from Eliot's preface to his own dissertation, published in 1964. The date of his writing this preface is unknown, but, unless it had been written 2 years before publication, this "[f]orty-six years" ago should have meant 1917. In fact, Eliot told J. H. Woods in his letter, dated March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1917, that he was still engaged in some "academic philosophizing" (*LI* 187). Nevertheless, with his job at Lloyds (starting on March 19<sup>th</sup>) and the forthcoming *Prufrock and Other Observations* (published by the Egoist Limited in June), Eliot had certainly passed the point of no return already.

<sup>71</sup> According to the "Glossary of Names" attached to *LI*, Eliot "recalled buying Joachim's *The Nature of Truth* at Harvard, and taking it with him in 1914 to Oxford" (824).



among the Spinoza experts to this day.<sup>72</sup> In fact, Russell himself remarked in 1910: “the task of interpretation [of Spinoza’s *Ethics*] has been admirably performed for the technical reader by Mr. Joachim, and for a wider class by Sir Frederick Pollock” (“Spinoza” 252). Eliot would certainly agree with these appreciations from a “scholarly”, “technical” point of view, as he writes to J. H. Woods, “[Joachim] is much better on historical problems than on constructive philosophy I think, and is really almost a genius, with respect to Aristotle” (LI 91). It may be useful in this context to quote at length from another earlier letter to Prof. Woods, in which Eliot, after one month of residence at Oxford, explains, with slight excitement, to his old teacher at Harvard all about his Oxford courses:

I am following these courses of lectures, Joachim’s on the *Ethics* [of Aristotle], Collingwood’s (of Pembroke) on the *de Anima*, and J. A. Smith’s Logic. Joachim is reading the *Posterior Analytics* with myself and one other man (who is likely to get a commission in the new army by Christmas, so that I may possibly have J. to myself); and besides I have an hour a week conference with Joachim and Smith’s ‘Informals’ which are quite informal indeed, as only one other man besides myself attends them. Smith’s Lectures are interesting as representing the purest strain of old fashioned Hegelianism to be found in England, I believe, and a type of philosophy with which I had never come into contact.<sup>73</sup> The *de Anima* course consists in reading, explaining, and commenting upon the text. Collingwood is a young person, but very good, I think. . . . The course of Joachim’s on the *Ethics* is particularly good. J. is perhaps the best lecturer here. He sticks pretty closely to the text, explaining other portions of Aristotle – especially parts of the *Organon*, when relevant. I find the abundance of cross

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<sup>72</sup> E.g. Viljanen (“Ontology”) begins his footnote 50 with Joachim’s *A Study of the Ethics* (1901) and ends with Gueroult, Matheron, and Deleuze; Kokubun (2011) gives an exceptionally significant status to Joachim’s posthumous *Spinoza’s Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* (1940).

<sup>73</sup> Cf. J. A. Smith, in his inaugural lecture as Waynflete Professor at Oxford on 26<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1910, trumpeted his belief thus: “To divide or partition anything presupposes that it is a whole, a whole of parts. Philosophy is above all things a whole, a whole in the most pregnant sense of the word – not an aggregate or a collection, but a well-ordered system. This it is at least in idea or as an ideal” (*Knowing* 5).

references very useful. . . [the Oxford discipline] has impressed upon my mind the value of two things: the value of personal instruction in small classes and individually, and the value of careful study of original texts in the original tongue – in contrast to the synoptic course. (LI 73-74)

It is – and this is no more than my wild guess – Joachim’s “personal instruction” and Eliot’s recognition of “the value of careful study of original texts in the original tongue” that may have encouraged him to work on Spinoza’s *Opera*. Or even earlier, when Eliot bought Joachim’s *The Nature of Truth* in Cambridge before he set sails for Europe, no doubt in order to prepare for the tutorials and dissertation awaiting him at Oxford, such a clear, definitive pronouncement of the fundamental philosophical standpoint as follows should have caught Eliot’s eyes:

As against the crude dualism of the correspondence-notion, and the still cruder pluralism which conceived truth as a quality of independent entities, we are committed to some form of monism. For the coherence-notion is essentially monistic . . . We examined the views of Aristotle as representing the correspondence-notion; but we have not studied any typical representative of the coherence-notion.

Now the monistic system of Spinoza stands out in the history of philosophy as representing the kind of position which we have been trying to develop and maintain. And if we trace the outlines of Spinoza’s theory of the nature of things, and follow him in his endeavour to deal with the problem of error, we shall have corrected the vagueness of our present attitude. For we shall be studying a philosophy in which the notion of coherence obtains definite form and systematic development, and in which there is a masterly effort to reckon with the difficulties.

(Joachim *Nature* 148)

Perhaps these guesses are not so wild after all, for Eliot did write in the margin right next to E 2p37: “v. Joachim / p.176”. As this and other related annotations made by Eliot in his

copy of Spinoza's *Opera* are to be analyzed in detail in Chapter Four, it here suffices to note that, evidently, Eliot consulted *A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza* by Joachim, together with the Boyle translation, when he made careful study of Spinoza in the original tongue.

Of course, this fact does not necessarily entail that Eliot worked on Spinoza because of Joachim's suggestion or even as part of his tutorial. It is, however, fair to maintain that Eliot read Spinoza in the context more or less under Joachim's influence – and here I argue that this Joachim's context is not related to Aristotle's *Ethics*, as one may surmise from the quotation above, but to Bradley's metaphysics. In one of the significant footnotes of *A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza*, Joachim indicates the Spinoza-Bradley connection with the typical reservation of a disciple when he evokes the name of the Master:

I hope I may be permitted to quote a paragraph which seems to me to express the essence of Spinoza's doctrine. I do not wish for a moment to imply that the views of the author are those of Spinoza, but the paragraph taken by itself puts one essential side of Spinoza's theory more clearly than anything I have seen. 'For me every kind of process between the Many is a state of the Whole in and through which the Many subsist. The process of the Many, and the total being of the Many themselves, are mere aspects of the one Reality which moves and knows itself within them, and apart from which all things and their changes and every knower and every known is absolutely nothing.' Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Explanatory Notes, p.609. (102; fn.1)

On the other hand, J. M. E. McTaggart, a leading British neo-Hegelian at Cambridge and Joachim's contemporary, quite blatantly remarks in his review of this very book: "This, it is evident, gives Spinoza's Substance a nature not materially different from Mr. Bradley's Absolute" (518). In fact, Joachim would certainly have attested to such a remark, as he himself makes, not so covertly, a similar comparison: "Put into modern terminology, the argument would be: The conception of self-dependent Reality forces us to the conclusion that there is nothing self-dependently real except the Absolute, the whole system; and the

conception of the Absolute forces us to conclude that it alone is self-dependently real” (*Ethics* 37).

It seems that Eliot was placed in a certain context where understanding Bradley was “essential” for understanding Spinoza, and *vice versa*, on which context I intend to elaborate in the rest of this chapter. To begin with, it would be best to quote from Eliot’s own comment on Bradley in his *Criterion* “Commentary” (Oct. 1924; signed CRITES) at “the death of the last survivor of the academic race of metaphysicians”:

The reserved power of Bradley’s philosophy resides perhaps herein: that, with all his apparent debt to Hegel, his philosophy is quite unaffected by the emotional obliquities which render German metaphysics monstrous. His philosophy is English; but in a different style from that of the brilliant Cambridge school, which is in the tradition of Locke and of Hume, of Rousseau and of the French rationalists. Bradley was a scholar and fellow of the reputed college of a great mediaeval scholastic [i.e., Merton]; this is a mere anecdote, but it is true that his philosophy preserves some of the sweetness and light of the mediaeval schoolmen. Who shall say that it does not draw some of its virtue from the genius of the place with which it is associated? (2)

There is already certain ambivalence in this panegyric. Eliot has to vindicate the somewhat Arnoldian, “scholastic” virtue of Bradley’s philosophy by distinguishing it from the “monstrous” German influence on one hand and, on the other, from “the brilliant Cambridge school” (i.e., Russell, Moore & Co.). It was indeed these two factors – the stigma of “neo-Hegelianism” (i.e., Teutonic = un-English<sup>74</sup>) and the stereotypical view concerning the Russell / Bradley dispute (i.e., Bradley’s antiquated metaphysics was overcome by Russell’s analytic philosophy) – that were eventually to let F. H. Bradley,

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<sup>74</sup> Of course, such a stigma was particularly harmful during and after the two World Wars. For example, Peter Geach, in “A Philosophical Autobiography”, remarks: “Some of Bradley’s sentiments are strongly reminiscent of Nazi state-worship” (qt. Candlish 174).

O.M., slip into oblivion. Candlish, in his recent *The Russell/Bradley Dispute*, gives a well-balanced reassessment, hence demystification, of the dispute, claiming that “at the very least, the balance needs to be redressed” (185), but even he cannot help describing the current situation with a hint of sarcasm:

At the time at which I am typing this sentence, approximately a century after the events and writings which I shall consider, Bradley is largely unknown to the wider reading public (who are more likely to have heard of his brother, the Shakespearean critic A. C. Bradley) and, when not forgotten altogether, mostly ignored by professional academic philosophers, while his influence on the content and style of philosophy is hardly to be discerned. It is almost a truism that the situation is quite other with Russell. (2)

From this perspective, Eliot in the last phase of “academic philosophizing” was on a rather surprising, if not necessarily suspicious, footing, as he was an American student, coming all the way to Merton, Oxford to study philosophy under the guidance of Joachim and to write a doctoral thesis on Bradley, while at the same time he maintained a strong tie, both personally and philosophically, with Russell. It was indeed surprising to his contemporaries as well, as Blanshard remembers Eliot’s already possum-ish behavior:

Three of us young Mertonians went off together in the spring of 1915 to the balmy little village of Swanage on the Dorset coast to get in some walking across the downs and some solid work on philosophy. To my astonishment Eliot spent his days not on Bradley, but on *Principia Mathematica*. He was feeling the pull of that rising luminary, Bertrand Russell. Russell had given his Lowell Lectures the year before in Boston. While there, he had given a course at Harvard on symbolic logic, and had reported that his two best students were Eliot and Raphael Demos, who later became a Harvard professor. (“Letters” 637)

This is typical of Eliot’s “relativism”, which we discuss fully in Chapter Three, but it is

particularly significant in the context of this chapter that Russell, too, tends to group Spinoza and Bradley together – this time, of course, as an enemy cohort. In the celebrated *Principles of Mathematics*, he criticizes their “dogma”:

Thus the theory of relations propounded by Lotze is, in fact, a theory that there are no relations. This has been recognised by the most logical adherents of the dogma – e.g. Spinoza and Mr. Bradley – who have asserted that there is only one thing, God or the Absolute, and only one type of proposition, namely that ascribing predicates to the Absolute. (*Principles*, 447-448)

The “dogma” here concerns the controversial axioms of relations (See especially Ch. 26 of the *Principles*). Russell is soon to make his targeted critique, in “The Monistic Theory of Truth” (1906-7), of the “coherent theory of truth” and the “axiom of internal relations” involved in that theory. This essay was, as is already mentioned above, a direct attack on Joachim’s *The Nature of Truth* (1906), but no reader would have failed to see that Joachim only stood proxy for his Master, F. H. Bradley. Here is Russell’s critique in a nutshell:

Consequently, if the axiom of internal relations is true, it follows that there is no diversity, and that there is only one thing. Thus the axiom of internal relations is equivalent to the assumption of ontological monism and to the denial that there are any relations. Wherever we seem to have a relation, this is really an adjective of the whole composed of the terms of the supposed relation. (“Monistic” 142)

According to Russell, Bradleyan / Spinozist monism leaves no room for diversity and [external] relations in this world, and thus it cannot explicate the “apparent multiplicity of the real world”, for “‘identity in difference’ is impossible, if we adhere to strict monism” and “yet without this conception [of ‘identity in difference’] monism can give no account of the world, which suddenly collapses like an opera-hat” (146). This can certainly be regarded as the strongest critique of the above passage of Bradley, quoted by Joachim as

that “which seems to [him] to express the essence of Spinoza’s doctrine” – none the less, or indeed all the more, for Russell’s characteristically facetious metaphor of “an opera hat”.<sup>75</sup> Regardless of whether such an all-out critique is relevant or not,<sup>76</sup> it is certainly a hot issue of the day in the British philosophical scenes, in which the Spinoza-Bradley connection is often invoked. One good example is G. Dawes Hicks’ long article on “the ‘Modes’ of Spinoza and the ‘Monads’ of Leibniz” (1917-8) in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* – one of the most important forums for philosophical debates at that time, published by the prestigious Aristotelian society, which Eliot has recently joined as well.<sup>77</sup> After a highly sophisticated comparative analysis of Spinoza and Leibniz – for the former Dawes Hicks draws much upon Joachim’s exposition – he begins his conclusion by remarking: “[t]he discussion in which we have been engaged is by no means one of merely historical interest. At the present time the questions at issue between Spinoza and Leibniz are reasserting themselves afresh” (359). Dawes Hicks continues:

What it is now customary to call the Absolute retains in essential respects the meaning which Spinoza assigned to Substance, and to a large extent Mr. Bradley’s

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<sup>75</sup> Here, one may well hear echoes in Eliot’s scepticism of Bradley’s absolute monism, and, by extension, metaphysics in general: “I suggest that from the ‘pluralism’ of Leibniz there is only a step to the ‘absolute zero’ of Bradley, and that Bradley’s Absolute dissolves at a touch into its constituents.” (KE 200); “From the critic’s standpoint the metaphysician’s world may be real only as the child’s bogey is real. . . . Metaphysical systems are condemned to go up like a rocket and come down like a stick” (KE 167-8).

<sup>76</sup> Deleuze would no doubt attest to the diametrically opposite conclusion: precisely because of “the assumption of ontological monism” (i.e., Univocity of Being / Pure Immanence), “diversity” and “[external] relations” of individual modes or *res singulares* (i.e., multiplicity of names) can be explicated. As for Bradley, see Griffin, esp. fn. 4 (154) for the list of the critics of Russell’s reductionist treatment of Bradley.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Bertrand Russell to Charlotte C. Eliot (Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> 1915): “Tom [Eliot] read me his review of Balfour’s Gifford Lectures, which I thought *admirable*, and so did the Editor of the *International Journal of Ethics*. I am glad he is joining the Aristotelian Society” (LI 134); Charlotte C. Eliot to Bertrand Russell (Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> 1916): “I feel very grateful to you for having obtained for Tom the opportunity to do this work, and am very glad he is to join the Aristotelian Society” (LI 144). In the former, Russell mentions that he is sending his *Philosophical Essays* (1910), which includes “The Monistic Theory of Truth”.

philosophy is the philosophy of Spinoza worked over anew in the light of subsequent science and reflexion. “The positive relation of every appearance as an adjective to Reality, and the presence of Reality among its appearances in different degrees and with diverse values” – this, Mr. Bradley tells us, is the “double truth” which he has found to be the “centre of philosophy.” That the position is beset with difficulties has been made evident enough by recent criticism. (359-360)

Eliot may have been introduced to Bradley’s philosophy by his Indo-Buddhist studies at Harvard,<sup>78</sup> but the Bradley he had to deal with when he was working on his dissertation in England was, to a large extent, this “philosophy of Spinoza worked over anew”, regardless of the philosophical standpoints – e.g., that of a faithful disciple (Joachim), that of a disrespectful rising generation (Russell), or even that of a disquieted fellow Hegelian (Caird<sup>79</sup>). In short, despite the fact that Bradley apparently avoided using the term

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<sup>78</sup> In his notes on the course of Buddhist philosophy (Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> 1913 – May 15<sup>th</sup> 1914), taught by Anesaki Masaharu, Visiting Professor from the University of Tokyo, the name of Bradley appears in parenthesis as follows: “One section of Mahasamghikas went farther in distinguishing the apparent and the real, & thought these two to be an uncompromising antithesis (Bradley)” (MS; Haughton). It is highly improbable that Anesaki himself referred to Bradley in his lecture, so it is fair to surmise that this association of Buddhist epistemology and Bradley is Eliot’s own. For a full-fledged discussion of Eliot’s Indo-Buddhist studies and their influence on his critical as well as creative writings, see Murata. For Eliot and Indic traditions in general, see Kearns; Perl & Tuck.

<sup>79</sup> Edward Caird, who is described, in comparison with T. H. Green, as “the other, and more unreservedly Hegelian, initiator of British idealism” (Quinton “Absolute” 309), was cautious, to say the least, of Bradley, his younger comrade in the same cause, according to John H. Muirhead: “It was hardly to be wondered at that the first impression produced [by *Appearance and Reality*] even among idealists was that they had before them a new form of Spinozism. ‘The Absolute’, wrote Caird, on first reading the book, ‘is to be all the attributes and yet *none* of them like Spinoza’s. We might perhaps say that [Bradley’s] theory is a new Spinozism” (Muirhead *Platonic* 262); “Edward Caird writing in the first weeks after its publication states with admirable brevity, though with equally admirable hesitation (owing to Bradley’s habit of bringing in ‘in a secondary way the points one would allege against him’), the chief criticisms which have often been repeated since. It is ‘Hegel’s dialectic turned backwards’; ‘a reversion to Spinoza, ending in the lion’s den, to which the feet all point inward’; ‘it involves a manifest contradiction, for the idea, which is set up as the test of truth, seems to be finally dissolved in the absolute, which is presented as the complete reality and set as the negation of all the reals which we know” (Muirhead “Bradley’s” 178-9). Muirhead is a disciple of Edward Caird and initiator of the influential Muirhead Library of Philosophy, which includes Bradley’s *Appearance and Reality*.



“Substance”,<sup>80</sup> the Spinoza-Bradley connection, it is safe to conclude, was regarded as a *fait accompli*<sup>81</sup> and also, more significantly, as the battlefield where important philosophical debates were fought around the time of Eliot’s “academic philosophizing”.

In order to prepare the way for critical analysis of Eliot’s mis/reading of Spinoza in the following chapters, this chapter has attempted to establish as firmly as possible, not necessarily the exact dates of reading, but the philosophical context in which Eliot must have close-read Spinoza’s text in the original. To close this preparatory chapter concerning the particularly *British* milieu of Spinoza scholarship and translation, it may perhaps be pertinent to quote a recollection by Samuel Shirley, who translated most of Spinoza’s work towards the end of the twentieth century:

At Oxford I do not remember that I read anything by Spinoza and very little about him. But that little interested me strangely. So I attended the lectures given by H. H. Joachim, without much understanding. . . . Many years later, being entrusted with the task of lecturing to university extension adult classes, I chose

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. “A peculiarity of Bradley’s metaphysics is that though a large part of it derives from, and centres around, an implicit notion of Substance and though the philosopher to whose theories his at this point has the closest resemblance (Spinoza) put the notion of Substance explicitly in the forefront of his teaching, in the whole of Bradley’s writing the word ‘Substance’ itself scarcely ever used” (Wollheim. *Bradley*, p.191). Perhaps, it wasn’t so peculiar in the eyes of Bradley’s contemporary: “Bradley of set purpose never mentioned his sources. His occasional references to Hegel are therefore doubly significant. So far as I know he made no special study of Spinoza, although one shrewd critic has marked him down as a ‘Spinozistic nature’. But whether he made a special study of Spinoza or not, one point is abundantly clear. The central principle of his thought, however much derived from Hegel, is derived from the Spinozistic side of Hegel” (Roth “Spinoza” 208). The “shrewd critic” here is Harald Höffding, a renowned Danish philosopher, who remarked, in his celebrated lecture in 1902 (English translation in 1915), *Modern Philosophers*: He is a Spinozistic nature; only he lacks Spinoza’s realistic eye for psychological and social phenomena” (58); “Here he passes over to undisturbed contemplation, to a settled view, to a treatment *sub specie aeterni*. It fares with him as with Spinoza. For Spinoza’s ‘Substance’ is just the standard of reality regarded as a perfect Being, the standard of reality as an existing ideal” (68).

<sup>81</sup> According to Eliot’s notes on J. A. Smith’s lecture (Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> 1915), Smith described an Italian philosopher, Bertrando Spaventa, as follows: “In spite of German inspiration his thought was as original as Green or Caird, or Bradley’s neo-spinozism” (“Notes on Logic”; MS Houghton).

Spinoza's *Ethics*, using the edition translated by Boyle. That edition was prefaced by an inspiring introduction by Santayana. But there were a number of passages in the translation that puzzled me, and when I sought out the original Latin in a library, I found that they were mistranslations. . . .

(“Translator’s Preface” to *Spinoza: Complete Works* vii)

Although Shirley was nearly quarter-century junior to Eliot, this recollection seems to echo Eliot’s own encounter with Spinoza at Oxford – at the apex of his “academic philosophizing”. It is needless to say, however, that Eliot was not only philosophizing in seclusion and tranquility those days. In fact, it was a most tumultuous and indeed life-changing period for him – the period of what Lyndall Gordon calls “Eliot’s Ordeal” – during which “[t]wo compelling individuals made claims on Eliot”, and, according to Gordon’s assessment, “Neither’s claim was unreasonable, but each distracted Eliot from his saint’s dream” (*Imperfect* 97-8). These two compelling individuals are, of course, Ezra Pound and Vivienne (often Vivien) Haigh-Wood. Under the sponsorship of the former, Eliot, to his mother’s great dismay,<sup>82</sup> gave up a promising career in academic philosophy for an unstable one in poetry, and with the latter he fell in love and soon got married. He moved from Oxford’s “reputed college of a great mediaeval scholastic” to London’s hustle-bustle, and yet he continued to work on Bradley, hence Spinoza, for a couple of years more. Eliot did indeed fall in love *and* read Spinoza.

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<sup>82</sup> See the letter that Charlotte C. Eliot (Eliot’s mother) wrote to Russell, dated May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1916: “I am sure your influence in every way will confirm my son in his choice of Philosophy as a life work. Professor Wood[s] speaks of his thesis as being of exceptional value. I had hoped he would seek a University appointment next year. If he does not I shall feel regret. I have absolute faith in his Philosophy but not in the *vers libres*” (*LI* 153).

## ***Chapter Two***

### **“See l’évolution créatrice”**

What I am saying is that Eliot’s great concern with order and tradition and hierarchy is in part a result of his direct and constant perception of disorder or of unknowable orders. He knows that human orders are what you do with disorder; he knows that no order remains vital which has lost its intimate contact, at some point, with the disorder or the unknown order which gave it rise.

--- R. P. Blackmur, “In the Hope of Straightening Things Out”

Before closely analyzing Eliot’s marginalia in full in the ensuing two chapters, this chapter picks up and focuses on one enigmatic note, “*See l’évolution créatrice*”, which Eliot has dropped in the margins of the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*. As is shown in what follows, the very fact that Eliot has *somehow* put Spinoza and Bergson together is itself quite enticing, as this connection immediately reminds us today of Deleuze, while the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics* is one of the most important *loci classici* for the New Spinozist engagements. This particular note is called “enigmatic” here, because the exact words or phrases to which Eliot attached this note can not be positively determined, and, moreover, it is not certain whether he meant this reference to Bergson’s *Creative Evolution* to be positive or negative. By analyzing this enigma of Eliot reading Bergson *in* Spinoza, I intend to shed light upon the *critical* side of Eliot’s reading of Spinoza and/or Bergson, while trying not to let my own reading too *creative*.

### **“a temporary conversion” and “a temporary submission”**

It is a well-known fact that Eliot made “a temporary conversion to Bergsonism” (*Sermon* 5) during his “romantic year” in Paris (Oct. 1910 ~ July 1911), where he attended Bergson’s immensely popular lectures at the Collège de France – according to Marcel Bataillon, Professor at the Collège (1945-65), it “was evidently a peak (I do not say the peak, but a peak) in Bergson’s career. It was the time, for one thing, when he had just given the lectures at Oxford on “The Perception of Change” [May 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> 1911] and, for another thing, had presented, at the Bologna convention, the famous paper on “Philosophical Intuition” [April 10<sup>th</sup> 1911]” (108). And yet, it is also well known that Eliot soon turned critical, like his Harvard teachers, Irving Babbitt and George Santayana,<sup>83</sup> of Bergson’s anti-intellectualism and mysticism, taking sides with order and permanence.<sup>84</sup> In this context, it is customary to mention, and in some cases directly discuss (Douglass; Maud Ellmann), Eliot’s handwritten notes on Bergson’s Friday lectures on Personality, now stored in Houghton Library, Harvard University. It is, however, almost never mentioned that Bergson made one more appearance in the lecture hall during that year – the Saturday lectures on Spinoza (*Mélanges* 845). That there survive no notes on the Saturday lectures does not necessarily entail that Eliot did not attend a single lecture of Bergson’s *explication*

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<sup>83</sup> In his senior year (1909-10) at Harvard, Eliot took Santayana’s course on “Philosophy of History” and Babbitt’s on “Literary Criticism in France”, the latter of which was to be incorporated into Babbitt’s *Masters of Modern French Criticism* (Howarth 131). The book is full of criticism against Bergson’s anti-intellectualism and cult of flux and multiplicity, but the following passage seems particularly characteristic of Babbitt’s, hence Eliot’s, fundamental dissatisfaction with Bergsonian *Weltanschauung*: “Instead of inviting us, like Plato, to use our intellectual distinctions as rounds in the ladder that leads to the intuition of the One, [Bergson] would have us turn our backs on our intellects in order that we may peer down into the vast swirling depths of the evolutionary process” (*Masters* 253). Around the same time, Santayana writes a long diatribe, “The Philosophy of M. Henri Bergson” (1912), in which he conclusively dismisses Bergson’s philosophy as nothing but “a confession of a certain mystical rebellion and atavism in the contemporary mind” (*Winds*. 109).

<sup>84</sup> Some critics (e.g. Le Brun) argue that Eliot’s overt rejection of Bergson is nothing but *repression*, so that Bergson’s influence on Eliot should be regarded as much deeper and more wide-reaching.

of Spinoza.<sup>85</sup> In fact, the title Eliot put on the cover of his notebook, “BERGSON – VENDREDI”, seems to suggest that at least Eliot had it in mind that there were Saturday lectures going on at the same time. Besides, there is strong evidence suggesting that Jean Verdenal, Eliot’s fellow lodger and closest friend in Paris, attended Bergson’s Saturday lectures.<sup>86</sup> Then, it shouldn’t be too farfetched to surmise that Eliot heard – or at least overheard – some of Bergson’s Saturday lectures on Spinoza in 1910-11.

It is not certain whether it was the custom of the Collège or of Bergson,<sup>87</sup> but, since his installation as Chair of Ancient Philosophy at the Collège de France in 1900 (in 1904, “thanks to a procedure rare in the Collège de France” (Bataillon 115), transferred to the Chair of Modern Philosophy, succeeding Tarde), Bergson devoted his Friday lectures to theoretical issues and Saturday lectures to commentary on the philosophical texts of his choice.<sup>88</sup> Bergson’s choice of that year was Spinoza’s *TdIE* – in fact, it was to turn out to be the first year of a series of Spinoza lectures, which lasted till 1914 when he quit lecturing

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<sup>85</sup> Against the common notion that Eliot only attended Bergson’s Friday lectures from early January to February 17<sup>th</sup>, whose notes survive, Hargrove strongly insists that Eliot must have attended all the lectures from December 9<sup>th</sup> 1910 to May 20<sup>th</sup> 1911. She even suggests that “[a] more plausible explanation for the limited notes in the Houghton Library is that those for the other lectures were lost” (285; n22). However, what she apparently means here is only the other Friday lectures, not the Saturday lectures on Spinoza.

<sup>86</sup> Claudio Perinot, who visited Jean Verdenal’s nephew in Pau in Southern France, lists the miscellanea that had belonged to Jean Verdenal, in which there is, apart from “notes and sketches on Bergson’s courses”, an item listed as “notes on existential philosophy (especially on Spinoza’s *De Intellectus Emendatione*)”. These notes were most certainly taken in Bergson’s Saturday lectures. Isn’t it even possible that these notes are actually Eliot’s “lost” notes, lent to his fellow lodger, who was a medical student full of passion for literature and philosophy?

<sup>87</sup> Cf. “Quite recently this famous college, recognizing the quality of its professors, has introduced a wise reform: they may themselves determine the number of hours which they deem necessary to give to lectures; no time-table is imposed upon them” (Ruhe 35). This is from an English book on Bergson published in 1914.

<sup>88</sup> The texts of his choice are as follows: <1900-01> *On Fate* by Alexander of Aphrodisias; <1901-2> *Enneades* VI.9 by Plotinus; <1902-3> *Physics* II by Aristotle; <1903-4> *Metaphysics* XI by Aristotle; <1904-5> *First Principles* by Herbert Spencer; <1905-6> Sabbatical; <1906-7> *Principles of Psychology* by Herbert Spencer; <1907-8> *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* by Berkeley; <1908-9> *Siris* by Berkeley; <1909-10> Sabbatical; <1910-11> *Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding* by Spinoza; <1911-12> the general principles of Spinoza’s philosophy (esp. *Ethics* I); <1912-13> visiting Columbia University; <1913-4> the theory of mind in Spinoza’s philosophy.

at the Collège for health reasons, never to return to the lecture hall.<sup>89</sup> Here is the overview of the Saturday lectures in 1910-11:

The Saturday course was devoted to commentary on the *Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding* [*TdIE*] of Spinoza. The professor has shown that the theory of various kinds of knowledge [connaissance], displayed in the *Treatise*, completely conforms to those found in the *Ethics*. He has emphasized the conditions of intuitive knowledge as Spinoza understands, and the Spinozist conception of the “true idea”. “Cartesianism” of Spinoza is, according to him, entirely superficial. The principal object of this course was to determine what is irreducible in Spinozism to any other doctrine. (*Mélanges* 846; my translation)

There is no way to know more about these lectures than this short summary, but the following passage from Bergson’s lecture at the Bologna Congress on May 10<sup>th</sup> 1911 (“Philosophical Intuition”), it is fair to surmise, reflects the content and significance of the Spinoza lectures:

As professor in the Collège de France I devote one of my courses each year to the history of philosophy. In that way I have been able to practice at length upon Berkeley and Spinoza the experiment I have just described. I shall not discuss Spinoza; he would take us too far afield. Nevertheless I know of nothing more instructive than the contrast between the form and the matter of a book like the *Ethics*: on the one hand those tremendous things called Substance, Attribute and Mode, and the formidable array of theorems with the close network of definitions, corollaries and scholia, and that complication of machinery, that power to crush which causes the beginner, in the presence of the *Ethics*, to be struck with

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<sup>89</sup> It is of great interest that Bergson spent the last few years of lecturing at the Collège on explicating Spinoza’s philosophy, as he was the first Jewish professor at the Collège and that it also happened that 1914 saw his books placed upon the Index by the Vatican on charge of pantheism. However, Bergson’s resignation from the Collège in 1914, which in fact took effect in 1920, had apparently nothing to do with the Index. According to Bergson himself, he resigned because he accepted the wartime mission to the U.S.A.

admiration and terror as though he were before a battleship of the Dreadnought class; on the other hand, something subtle, very light and almost airy, which flees at one's approach, but which one cannot look at, even from afar, without becoming incapable of attaching oneself to any part whatever of the remainder, even to what is considered essential, even to the distinction between Substance and Attribute, even to the duality of Thought and Extension. What we have behind the heavy mass of concepts of Cartesian and Aristotelian parentage, is that intuition which was Spinoza's, an intuition which no formula, no matter how simple, can be simple enough to express. . . . The closer we get to this original intuition the better we understand that if Spinoza had lived before Descartes he would doubtless have written something other than what he wrote, but that given Spinoza living and writing, we were certain to have Spinozism in any case.

(CM 92-3)

Had Eliot attended the Saturday lectures at all, he would have heard Bergson passionately and eloquently talk of Spinoza's *singularity* (i.e., irreducibility to any other doctrine, let alone Cartesianism), to which his ineffably simple "intuition" was an exquisite tribute. It might probably not have led Eliot to close-reading of Spinoza with technical or academic interest – which was to come later with Joachim in my theory – but it is still possible that the *image* of Spinoza as a *singular* figure would have been impressed on young Eliot's mind in a more or less Bergsonian context (Bergson once wrote to Brunschvicg, "One can say that every philosopher has two philosophies: his own and that of Spinoza" (qt. Mossé-Bastide 67; my translation)). Whatever its origin, this image certainly helped to let the name of Spinoza or several Spinozist terms pop up sporadically, often unexpectedly, in Eliot's prose. As late as 1952, we hear the echo of this *singular* Spinoza:

The opposite error is that of an older and more romantic attitude, which produced what I may call the 'one-man' philosophy: that is to say, a world view which was a projection of the personality of its author, a disguised imposition of his own temperament with all its emotional bias, upon the reader. I do not wish to

diminish the grandeur or the value of the greatest one-man philosophies. When such a philosophy is done superbly well, as by Spinoza, it retains a permanent importance for humanity: for an acquaintance with Spinoza, and a temporary submission to his influence, is an experience of great value.

(Introduction to Pieper xvi)<sup>90</sup>

Whether this “temporary submission to [Spinoza’s] influence” is directly connected to what Eliot had called “a temporary conversion to Bergsonism” four years earlier remains a matter of conjecture, and it would be, I believe, “a most hazardous and uncertain undertaking” to find the “influence”<sup>91</sup> of Spinoza and/or Bergson everywhere in Eliot’s writings, as Richard Wollheim, who was then the authority of F. H. Bradley’s philosophy and also wrote several authoritative essays concerning the Bradley-Eliot connection, cautioned against a similar undertaking with regard to the far more likely candidate, F. H. Bradley.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, what Wollheim detects, after the above disclaimer, as “two dispositions of the psyche of which . . . we simply become aware in reading the text [of Eliot]” is very insightful and seems, indeed, highly suggestive as to our topic as well:

On the one hand, we may detect in Eliot a certain fear of the intellect: rather as though it were envisaged as something having the power to damage or dement those who used it in a literal manner. And alongside this, and at certain crucial points linked with it, there would appear to be in Eliot’s make-up another disposition, which we may characterize by saying that it was only after he had

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<sup>90</sup> In the same introduction, Eliot also mentions Bergson: “It may be a longing for the appearance of a philosopher whose writings, lectures and personality will arouse the imagination as Bergson, for instance, aroused it forty years ago. . .” (xi)

<sup>91</sup> In my opinion, those who “find” Bergsonian “influence” almost everywhere in Eliot’s poetry and prose (Le Brun; Douglass; Gray; Childs) mistake *virtuality* for *actuality* (to use the Bergsonian-Deleuzian concepts) with regard to such *intensive* experiences of temporary conversion / submission as Eliot went through with Spinoza and Bergson. Thus, where those critics see the actual “shadows” of Bergson, I sense the “subterranean” flow of Bergsonian / Spinozist virtuality; where they psychoanalyze “repressions”, I schizoanalyze “symptoms”.

<sup>92</sup> “To trace the influence of Bradley’s philosophy upon Eliot any way beyond such generalities seems to me a most hazardous and uncertain undertaking” (Wollheim *Art* 248).



made some kind of initial submission to a force felt in itself to be uncongenial or external, that he felt free to do something for himself or on his own account.

(Wollheim *Art* 248)

Among such “initial submissions”, we may as well count Spinoza and/or Bergson. And, as Eliot’s emphasis on instantaneity and exteriority, hence singularity, of the experience (“a temporary conversion / submission”) well suggests, the Spinoza-Bergson case with him seems, like trauma, so intense and subterranean as to run deep, perhaps undetected except symptomatically, through caverns measureless to any positivistic reading that would only measure various “facts” and “evidences” of Eliot’s overt rejection of their “doctrines” here and there.<sup>93</sup>

### **“et imaginationem pro intellectu capiunt”**

Perhaps, such an insight – or, as Bergson might well call, “intuition” – into Eliot’s unacknowledged (and perhaps unacknowledgeable) debts may not prove anything, but one thing is certain: Eliot *did*, at one point or another, read Spinoza and Bergson, not by way of a skim-through in order to confirm some *idées reçues* as regards Spinozism or Bergsonism,

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<sup>93</sup> E.g., most typically, Eliot compares Bradley’s “pure philosophy” with Bergson’s “meretricious use of science in philosophy”: “Bergson makes use of science – biology and psychology – and this use sometimes conceals the incoherence of a multiplicity of points of view, not all philosophic. Has not his exciting promise of immortality a somewhat meretricious captivation?” (“Prediction” 29). It is, in passing, interesting to speculate, in terms of Bergson’s “exciting promise of immortality”, as to Eliot’s turn to Indo-Buddhist studies right after his “temporary conversion to Bergsonism”. Conrad Aiken, Eliot’s Harvard chum, recollects his visit to Eliot’s flat in Paris in his semi-fictional autobiography, which seems to suggest that there was somehow a link: “Equivocal, ambiguous, but also germinal and central, a swift recapitulation (of all that had gone on during the year at Harvard, on the one hand, and the Sorbonne, on the other), synthesis followed by thesis, and then the casting of runes, the making of plans. Bergson, and *L’Évolution Créatrice*, and the Tsetse’s [Eliot’s] intention to return to Harvard for a study of Sanskrit, but behind these the target-practice with the revolver . . .” (*Ushant* 157).

but with “a peculiar personal intimacy”, to use the phrase in Eliot’s “Reflections on Contemporary Poetry [IV]” (*Egoist*, July 1919) – the passage to which we will return in our Conclusion. And yet, even without such an insight, it seems that the “enigmatic note” wouldn’t be an enigma at all, if we simply followed our commonsense supported by our knowledge of Eliot’s “mature” attitudes towards Bergson. That is to say, Eliot underlined “et imaginationem pro intellectu capiunt [and mistake their imagination for intellect]”, simply because that phrase reminded him of a common idea that Bergsonian “anti-intellectualism” was a typical example of such a “mistake” of confounding intellect with something else.

Around that time, there were already great abundance of criticisms against Bergson’s alleged “anti-intellectualism”. For instance, Ralph Barton Perry, one of Eliot’s teachers at Harvard and advocate of the nascent “New Realism”, published his “Notes on the Philosophy of Henri Bergson” in December 1911, several months after Eliot returned from Paris to Harvard, in which he calls Bergson as “the most radical ‘anti-intellectualist’” of “eminent contemporary writers belonging to the pragmatist school in the broad sense” (“Notes I” 674) and warns, in conclusion, that the radicalism of this type “destroys the originality and distinction of pragmatism and allies it with forces of romanticism, mysticism, and irrationalism” (II 721). It is rather interesting that in the particular context of Harvard in 1911, to which Eliot returned, there seems to have been this sense of rescuing Pragmatism from the epidemic of Bergsonism – as if they were still trying to recover from the shock of William James’ final renunciation of “the intellectualistic method” and logic altogether shortly before his death in 1910<sup>94</sup> – but Perry was certainly not the one whom Eliot, fresh from Paris, would listen to in earnest.<sup>95</sup> Although it is not certain when his

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<sup>94</sup> “[Bergson’s philosophy] was what had led me personally to renounce the intellectualistic method and the current notion that logic is an adequate measure of what can or cannot be.” (*Pluralistic* 101)

<sup>95</sup> Cf. “Eliot returned to Harvard at a time when its prestigious philosophy department had just lost its leading figures – Santayana, George Herbert Palmer, and William James. While Eliot had been an undergraduate, the department had an idealist bias dominated by Hegel, but in 1912 Ralph Barton Perry and five others inaugurated a doctrinal change with a book on the New Realism. Eliot

“temporary conversion to Bergsonism” was revoked, Eliot was, without doubt, ready to assent to Bertrand Russell’s criticism against Bergson in 1914, when Russell visited Harvard and met Eliot as a graduate student, whom he described as “very well dressed and polished, with manners of the finest Etonian type” (qt. *LI* 831). This was also the year that saw the publication in book form of Russell’s “The Philosophy of Bergson”, perhaps the most famous of all the attacks on Bergson in English-speaking academia. The paper had originally been read before the Heretics in Trinity College, Cambridge, on March 11<sup>th</sup> 1912, published in the *Monist* in July, and was eventually, with H. Wildon Carr’s reply on Bergson’s behalf and Russell’s rejoinder, made into a book in 1914, which Eliot would hardly have failed to notice. Russell, as always, is clear and trenchant:

One of the bad effects of an anti-intellectual philosophy, such as that of Bergson, i[s] that it thrives upon the errors and confusions of the intellect. Hence it is led to prefer bad thinking to good, to declare every momentary difficulty insoluble, and to regard every foolish mistake as revealing the bankruptcy of intellect and the triumph of intuition. There are in Bergson’s works many allusions to mathematics and science, and to a careless reader these allusions may seem to strengthen his philosophy greatly. (*Bergson* 16)

And he goes on attacking Bergson’s “errors and confusions of the intellect” on his home ground of mathematics. In Cambridge, Massachusetts, two years later, he took up the

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admitted that the Realists might be refreshing, but he was put off by their subservience to mathematics and the exact sciences. He could not accept that a course on symbolic logic, given in 1914, by the English philosopher and mathematician, Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) had ‘anything to do with reality’. Instead of joining the Realists, he turned first to Indian philosophy and, after two years, devoted himself to the work of an Oxford idealist, F. H. Bradley. With Bradley’s help, Eliot was able to chart a way through the intellectual maze in which he found himself in 1912.” (Gordon 71); See also Eliot’s own recollection in 1935: “The Six Realists were un-Teutonised, and on the whole anti-religious, which was refreshing; they were ascetically, even gloomily, scientific; and they professed considerable respect for Mr. Bertrand Russell and his Cambridge friends. All this was to the good; but it must be admitted that the New Realism, like most pre-War philosophies, seems now as demoded as ladies’ hats of the same period” (“Views and Reviews” 151).

attack again in his Lowell Lectures in March and April 1914, which Eliot attended before leaving for Europe and on which occasion Eliot got acquainted with “that rising luminary”. This time, drawing much upon Bergson’s “Introduction to Metaphysics”, widely read in the English-speaking world thanks to T. E. Hulme’s translation in 1913,<sup>96</sup> Russell places his critique in a historical perspective:

It is common to speak of an opposition between instinct and reason; in the eighteenth century, the opposition was drawn in favour of reason, but under the influence of Rousseau and the romantic movement instinct was given the preference, first by those who rebelled against artificial forms of government and thought, and then, as the purely rationalistic defence of traditional theology became increasingly difficult, by all who felt in science a menace to creeds which they associate with a spiritual outlook on life and the world. Bergson, under the name of “intuition,” has raised instinct to the position of sole arbiter of metaphysical truth. But in fact the opposition of instinct and reason is mainly illusory. (*Our Knowledge* 20-21)

Such a historical perspective must have been most appealing, or flattering even, to Irving Babbitt in the audience, who had already set out on a lifelong crusade against Rousseau and Romanticism, and also to his students, among whom was T. S. Eliot. In this way, Bergson’s “anti-intellectualism” in favor of “intuition” over “intellection” can be regarded as nothing but atavistic revival of the Romantic cult of instinct and imagination, and, as is generally acknowledged, the post-Bergsonian Eliot no doubt endorsed such a view and was to develop it into his own anti-Romantic poetics (“impersonal theory”) and historiography (“dissociation of sensibility”).

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<sup>96</sup> It was first translated by Sidney Littman and published in 1912 by a Boston publisher as *The Introduction to a New Philosophy*. Eliot gave a copy of this translation to his mother for Christmas 1912 (Ackroyd 20). Cf. her letter to Russell (Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>, 1916): “I read Bergson’s *Creative Evolution* and attended a course of lectures thereon, largely influenced by Tom’s enthusiasm, which I think became later a ‘diminishing quantity’. In Bergson’s emphasis on *life*, its power and indestructibility, I think some persons found an intimation of immortality, which excited their interest” (*LI* 143).

In fact, Eliot, in his formative period as an “intellectualist” critic, often refers to Bergson as exemplary of “the bad criticism”. Read the following two passages, written almost simultaneously – the first is from “The Perfect Critic” (*Athenaeum*, July 1920) and the second from “The Possibility of a Poetic Drama” (*Dial*, Nov. 1920), both collected in *The Sacred Wood*, published in the same year:

The bad criticism, on the other hand, is that which is nothing but an expression of emotion. And emotional people – such as stockbrokers, politicians, men of science – and a few people who pride themselves on being unemotional – detest or applaud great writers such as Spinoza or Stendhal because of their “frigidity.”

(SW 15)

In the works of Maeterlinck and Claudel on the one hand, and those of Bergson on the other, we have the mixture of the genres in which our age delights. Every work of imagination must have a philosophy; and every philosophy must be a work of art – how often have we heard that M. Bergson is an artist! It is a boast of his disciples. It is what the word “art” means to them that is the disputable point. Certain works of philosophy can be called works of art: much of Aristotle and Plato, Spinoza, parts of Hume, Mr. Bradley’s *Principles of Logic*, Mr. Russell’s essay on “Denoting”: clear and beautifully formed thought. But this is not what the admirers of Bergson, Claudel, or Maeterlinck (the philosophy of the latter is a little out of date) mean. They mean precisely what is not clear, but what is an emotional stimulus. And as a mixture of thought and of vision provides more stimulus, by suggesting both, both clear thinking and clear statement of particular objects must disappear. (SW 66-7)

The one word that characterizes Eliot’s idea of “the bad criticism” is, I submit, “mixture” (or “adulteration”) – mixture of the genres<sup>97</sup>, mixture of emotion and intellect, mixture of

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<sup>97</sup> Cf. “The opposite of the professional, the enemy, is the man of mixed motives. Conspicuously the Victorian epoch is anti-professional; Carlyle as an historian, Ruskin as an economist; Thackeray who could write such good prose as the Steyne episode, and considered himself a kindly but penetrating satirist; George Eliot who could write *Amos Barton* and steadily degenerate. Decadence in art is

human emotions and art emotions<sup>98</sup> (or, in the celebrated formulation of the “impersonal theory”, mixture of “the man who suffers” and “the mind which creates” (SW 54)). It thus follows that criticism and/or art as “an expression of [human] emotion” without the mind’s intellectual mediating process (cf. the celebrated analogy of the “catalyst”) is also guilty of mixture of matter and form. On the opposite pole, according to the above passages, are “frigidity” and “clear thinking” – interestingly enough, Spinoza makes his entry into the frigid-clear camp in both cases. This clear-cut “criterion” – Eliot’s favorite term as well as Bradley’s – of Eliot’s brand of intellectualism has already been firmly established as early as 1917, as the following passage from “Reflections on Contemporary Poetry [II]” (*Egoist*, Oct. 1917) amply suggests:

A poet is not a pure intellectual by virtue of any amount of meditation or abstractness or moralizing . . . A poet like M. de Bosschère is an intellectual by his obstinate refusal to adulterate his poetic emotions with human emotions. Instead of refining ordinary human emotion (I do not mean tepid human emotion, but human however intense – in the crude living state) he aims direct at emotions of art. He thereby limits the number of readers, and leaves the majority groping for a clue which does not exist. The effect is sometimes an intense frigidity which I find altogether admirable. (133)

From the avant-gardist poetics at the very beginning of his career as a poet-critic (Pound and his cohorts at that time were nicknamed as “literary bolsheviks”<sup>99</sup>) to his later

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caused by mixed motives, and Oscar Wilde finally added ingredients to the mixture which made it a ludicrous emetic.” (“Professional” 61).

<sup>98</sup> Cf. “Certainly I don’t deny the importance of emotion. I often find it present to me when other people find only frigidity – or vice versa. One writes about the world one has experienced: and experience without emotion (of *some* kind) is almost a contradiction. I think there is an important distinction between the emotions which are in the experience which is one’s material and the emotion in the writing – the two seem to me very different.” (Eliot to Fletcher, Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup> 1920; *LI* 503)

<sup>99</sup> “[Pound] and I and our colleagues were mentioned by a writer in *The Morning Post* as ‘literary bolsheviks’ and by Mr. Arthur Waugh (with a point which has always escaped me) as ‘drunken helots’” (*UPUC* 71). Baldick refers to this epithet as “hardly an accurate description of their politics, but a

ostensibly reactionary politics<sup>100</sup> (Eliot's nickname then was "the Pope of Russell Square"), Eliot's "obstinate refusal" of mixture or adulteration as *the* intellectual(ist) criterion stays unchanged and indeed unadulterated. Even earlier, when he was still engaged in "academic philosophizing", the same criterion was already in operation. The following attack on Nietzsche is from a book review Eliot wrote for the *International Journal of Ethics* in April 1916:

Nietzsche is one of those writers whose philosophy evaporates when detached from its literary qualities, and whose literature owes its charm not alone to the personality and wisdom of the man, but to a claim to scientific truth. Such authors have always a peculiar influence over the large semi-philosophical public, who are spared the austere effort of criticism required either by metaphysics or literature, by either Spinoza or Stendhal; who enjoy the luxury of confounding, and avoid the task of combining different interests. (426)

It is not difficult for the reader to immediately see that "Nietzsche" here can be replaced with "Bergson", whose "literary qualities", "claim to scientific truth", and "peculiar influence over the large semi-philosophical public" are notorious, or at least regarded as such by his critics. What those "semi-philosophical public" (i.e., "emotional people" and "admirers of Bergson, Claudel, or Maeterlinck" above) enjoy is "the luxury of confounding"

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striking image of the way in which they seemed consciously to have seized the opportunity provided by the war for their own disloyal motives" (111).

<sup>100</sup> It is not within the scope of this present work, but it should here be worth noting that Eliot's phobia of "mixture" or "adulteration" was so deeply rooted that it certainly affected such reactionary political views as (Roman-style) imperialism and anti-Semitism that he later developed: "I am all for empires, especially the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and I deplore the outburst of artificial nationalities, constituted like artificial genealogies for millionaires, all over the world. . . . Let us not have an indiscriminate mongrel mixture of socialist internationals, or of capitalist cosmopolitans, but a harmony of different functions" (Letter to Ford Madox Ford (Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> 1923), published in *Transatlantic Review* (Jan. 1924); *LII* 251-2); "The population should be homogeneous; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to be fiercely self-conscious or both to become adulterate. What is still more important is unity of religious background; and reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable" (ASG 19-20).

(i.e., mixture or adulteration), and what they cannot read is, again, Spinoza among others.

All these illustrations suggest that, according to Eliot's intellectual(ist) criterion, Spinoza's metaphysics, with its "frigidity" and "clear thinking", stands eminently critical of Bergsonian "mixture", "adulteration" or "confounding". It seems, then, commonsensical to conclude that Eliot was, on reading the phrase "et imaginationem pro intellectu capiunt" (i.e., Spinoza's critique of mixture of imagination and intellect), immediately reminded of Bergsonian anti-intellectualism as a typical example. And yet, there remain several doubts to such an easy conclusion: If Eliot meant to pick at Bergson's anti-intellectualism in general, why did he single out *Creative Evolution*, rather than simply writing "Bergson" or "Bergsonism", or even, as Russell did in his Lowell lectures, referring to "Introduction à la métaphysique"<sup>101</sup>? On the other hand, if he wanted to refer to *Creative Evolution*, why did he pick up this particular passage, rather than some other parts of the *Ethics* that Bergson directly dealt with in Chapter 4 of *Creative Evolution* (i.e., Bergson's critique of "parallelism" and "epiphenomenalism")?; And, finally, why didn't Eliot write this note right next to the underline, but a couple of lines below? And behind all these lurks the ultimate question: Isn't this note positive, i.e., didn't Eliot find a parallel *critical* theory here and in Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, rather than simply finding Spinoza's prescient critique of Bergson before the fact?

### **"ideo *Ordinem* in rebus esse firmiter credunt"**

In order to consider these questions, we must first establish the context of the passage

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<sup>101</sup> Cf. "Bergson has been systematically labeled an 'irrationalist', and the most frequently quoted evidence for this accusation comes from his essay *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1903). Though apparently consistent with other writings, many of which repeat the same tenets, this essay used to be singled out by rationalist critics because of some especially strong formulas and because 'intuition' was used in it as a leading battle-cry." (Kolakowski 249)



concerned. The long Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics* is known as a clear statement critical of what Deleuze calls “the operation of a triple illusion”: “the illusion of final causes” [i.e., taking effects for causes]; “the illusion of free decrees” [i.e., the psychological illusion of human freedom]; and “the theological illusion” [i.e., finalism, or the divine disposition] (*Practical* 20). In Spinoza’s words, various “prejudices”<sup>102</sup> depend upon the one, “that men commonly suppose that all natural things act like themselves with an end in view . . . and that God directs all things to a certain end” (Vloten 66 / Boyle 30; Eliot’s underline<sup>103</sup>), and now Spinoza declares that he shall deal with those prejudices in the following three steps: (1) To inquire “why so many fall into this error, and why all are by nature so prone to embrace it”; (2) To “show its falsity”; and (3) To show “how these misunderstandings [prejudices] have arisen concerning good and evil, virtue and sin, praise and blame, order and confusion, beauty and ugliness, and other things of this kind” (*ibid.*; Eliot highlights (3).). First of all, Spinoza ingeniously denounces the illusions of freedom (Eliot’s underline) and finalism, concluding that “[N]ature has no fixed aim in view, and that all final causes are merely fabrications of men” (Vloten 68 / Boyle 32). Then he shows that the doctrine of final causes is nothing but “reversal”<sup>104</sup> of Nature, and leads to a decisively false idea that “destroys the perfection of God: for if God seeks an end, he necessarily desires something which he lacks” (Vloten 68 / Boyle 33; Eliot’s underline). Here, Spinoza tells the famous parable of a stone falling on the head of a passer-by, in order to illustrate how the “adherents of this doctrine . . . will pursue you from cause to cause [for instance, “Why was the wind blowing at that time?”] until you are glad to take refuge in the

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<sup>102</sup> “*praejudicia*”. Boyle’s translation is “misunderstandings”.

<sup>103</sup> For convenience, I do not quote from the Latin text (Vloten & Land, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), only indicating the page(s) in the original, but instead quote from the Boyle translation, which Eliot was using. So, when I note “Eliot’s underline”, the reader should understand that Eliot underlines the equivalent part in the Latin text.

<sup>104</sup> “*hanc de fine doctrinam Naturam omnino evertere*”. The Boyle translation (“overthrow entirely that foolish doctrine of a final cause”) is totally erroneous. Compare the Shirley translation here: “this doctrine of Final Causes turns Nature completely upside down” (240). The word “reverse” (“*evertere*”) here is crucial, as I presently argue, for the Althusserian critique of ideology.

will of God, that is, the asylum of ignorance” (Vloten 69 / Boyle 33). And finally, as part of the step (3), comes the passage concerned:

They call all that which is conducive of health and the worship of God good, and all which is conducive of the contrary, evil. And forasmuch as those who do not understand the things of nature are certain of nothing concerning those things, but only imagine them and mistake their imagination for intellect, they firmly believe there is order in things, and are ignorant of them and their own nature. [sed res tandummodo imaginantur, et imaginationem pro intellectu capiunt, ideo *Ordinem* in rebus esse firmiter credunt, rerum suæque naturæ ignari.] Now when things are so disposed that when they are represented to us through our senses we can easily imagine and consequently easily remember them, we call them well-ordered; and on the other hand, when we cannot do so, we call them ill-ordered or confused. Now forasmuch as those things, above all others, are pleasing to us which we can easily imagine, men accordingly prefer order to confusion, as if order were anything in nature save in respect to our imagination; and they say that God has created all things in order, and thus unwittingly they attribute imagination to God, unless indeed they would have that God providing for human imagination disposed all things in such a manner as would be most easy for our imagination; nor would they then find it perhaps a stumbling block to their theory that infinite things are found which are far beyond the reach of our imagination, and many which confuse it through its weakness.

(E 1app; Vloten 70 / Boyle 34; Eliot’s underlines; italics in the original Latin text)

On this page, Eliot writes, in the margin a couple of lines below the underline (next to “Now when things are disposed. . .”): “See l’évolution créatrice”.

As even this short summary well suggests, this Appendix is a rare feat in epistemology as a radical critique of “imaginatio” – our world in operation by means of the illusions of the Subject (i.e., God / Ego) and reversal of Nature (i.e., the order of things). Here we must quickly add that it is misleading to equate Spinoza’s “imaginatio” to the modern usage of “imagination”, which is heavily charged with Romantic ideology.

Joachim, while complaining of inconsistencies in Spinoza's terminology, makes a helpful explication: "It is, then, the general character of every 'imaginatio' to be an idea which pictures an external body as actually existent, i.e. as present to us. So far, the world of 'imagination' may be called the 'world of presentation' – a world which we picture as a complex of external things acting upon one another and upon us" (*Ethics* 156) – in today's theoretical language, we would rather use "representation" than "presentation". Here, I venture to suggest, Spinoza's "imaginatio" would be best rendered into English as "ideology", in the sense that Althusser theorizes it: "What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the *imaginary* relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" ("Ideology" 125; my italics). In fact, Althusser later reflects, in his autobiographical "The Only Materialist Tradition", that, in this Appendix, he immediately saw "the matrix of every possible theory of ideology", which helped him "rediscover" Marx and Lenin:

What, then, was the imagination that thus constituted the essence of our common *Lebenswelt*? Spinoza explained it with exemplary clarity in the appendix to part I of the *Ethics*. The imagination is (1) to put the (human) subject at the center and origin of every perception, of every action, of every object, and of every meaning, but (2) to reverse in this way even the real order of things, since the real order is *explained* (and not "*comprehended*," a subjective if not subjectivist notion *completely foreign to Spinoza*) solely by the determination of causes, while the subjectivity of the imagination explains everything by means of ends, by the subjective illusion of the ends of its desire and its expectations. This is, strictly speaking, to *reverse* the order of the world, to make it walk, as Hegel and Marx will say, "*on its head*." . . . It is in the appendix to part I of the *Ethics* that Spinoza developed his admirable critique of religious ideology, in which the human subject endowed with finalized desires projects himself into God as the original and final cause of the Universe, as the cause (in truth not the cause at all but the origin) of all meaning, that is, of every finality, of the Universe. That every meaning is an *end*, that is, an *eschatology of an imaginary meaning* – what

critical depth! I saw in it immediately the matrix of every possible theory of ideology and profited from it . . . (“Materialist” 6-7; Althusser’s italics)

It is, then, no accident that Pierre Macherey, in his seminal *Hegel or Spinoza*, quotes from the same Appendix – the passage already quoted above:

This is why to explain nature according to the necessity of its concatenation [*ses enchaînements*] presumes that we renounce its subordination to the initiative of a subject, whatever that might be, even if this subject were to be placed, integrally within nature itself, and to impose on it the definitive form of a Whole [*Tout*]. We will return to this question, but we can indicate immediately that these illusions of an internal finality [i.e., Ego or Cogito] are no less dangerous than those of an external finality [i.e., God or Nature]; they are rather the same thing, which are projected and concentrated from the illusory exteriority of an independent subject, within the immanent disposition [*ordonnement*] of a form that grants itself its own ends:

[quotation from the above passage in *E* 1app: “And forasmuch as those who do not understand the things of nature ~ as if order were anything in nature save in respect to our imagination”]

In nature itself, there is neither order nor disorder: these notions are inadequate to its essence. (160-1; translation modified)

In the previous paragraph, Macherey has discussed the illusions of “an external finality” (which are equivalent to “the theological illusion” (Deleuze) and “[Spinoza’s] admirable critique of religious ideology” (Althusser)) by referring to Chapter Six of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*; while, in this paragraph, in order to illustrate the “no less dangerous” illusions of “an internal finality” (which are equivalent to “the illusion of free decrees” (Deleuze) and “the subjective illusion of the ends of its desire and its expectations” (Althusser)), he chooses this particular passage with regard to the “prejudice concerning

order and confusion” – the very same passage that Eliot annotates with the enigmatic reference to *Creative Evolution*. Macherey’s point here is clear: the ideas of order and disorder, which is but imposed by the illusory free decrees of human subjects upon Nature according to their desire and expectations, is thus exemplary of “imaginatio” (“ideology”), mistaken for “intellectus” (“science”). What is not clear is why Eliot has also chosen this passage to refer to *Creative Evolution*.

My hypothesis is this: it is not a kind of clichéd antipathy toward Bergson’s anti-intellectualism, but a specific argument in Chapter Three of *Creative Evolution*, concerning the ideas of order and disorder, that Eliot was reminded of when he read this passage. In other words, his “enigmatic note” should not be regarded as a random thought evoked by the underlined phrase, “et imaginationem pro intellectu capiunt”, but rather as a manifestation of his highly *theoretical* concern with the ideas of order and disorder, critically analyzed in the sentences immediately following the above underlined phrase *as well as* in *Creative Evolution*. Here I suggest that, for instance, Eliot must have been reminded of such a passage in *Creative Evolution*:

We imagine facts that appear and disappear *capriciously*. First we think of the physical universe as we know it, with effects and causes well proportioned to each other; then, by a series of arbitrary decrees, we augment, diminish, suppress, so as to obtain what we call disorder. In reality we have substituted *will* for the mechanism of nature; we have replaced the “automatic order” by a multitude of elementary wills, just to the extent that we imagine the apparition or vanishing of phenomena. No doubt, for all these little wills to constitute a “willed order,” they must have accepted the direction of a higher will. (*CE* 246; Bergson’s italics)

This passage is from the celebrated discussion of the “two species of order”, i.e., the “vital” order and the “geometric” order, in which Bergson criticizes the “confusions” of these two orders – in a manner that would certainly have satisfied Eliot’s mixture-phobic

intellectual(ist) criterion – so that “as soon as we have clearly distinguished between the order that is ‘willed’ and the order that is ‘automatic,’ the ambiguity that underlies the idea of *disorder* is dissipated, and with it, one of the principle difficulties of the problems of knowledge” (244; Bergson’s italics). Bergson, being highly controversial here, goes as far as to challenge the common notion “that *there might be no order at all*, and that the mathematical [i.e., geometrical] order of things, being a conquest over disorder, possesses a positive reality” (232; Bergson’s italics). In other words, our intellect, “[a]ll the operations of [which] tend to geometry, as to the goal where they find their perfect fulfilment” (222), wants the geometrical order to possess a positive reality, so that, when we face the absence of that order, we cannot but form the pseudo-idea (or illusion) of disorder as negative justification of its positivity – that is, in Deleuze’s words, a “retrograde movement of the true”.<sup>105</sup> However, the fact of the matter is, according to Bergson’s theory of the “two species of order”, that we are not facing disorder here but only the other [vital] order, and that the geometrical order, which we imagine is a positive reality, is nothing but the “interruption of the inverse [vital] order” (232).

Apparent disparity between Bergson’s “two orders” and Spinoza’s “no order” should not worry us here. When Macherey summarizes the above passage of Spinoza as indicating that “[i]n nature itself, there is neither order nor disorder: these notions are *inadequate* to its essence” (my emphasis), he talks about the world viewed in “*imaginatio*” (the First Kind of Knowledge), where people are blinded by *inadequate* ideas, which do not lead to knowledge of their causes, “like consequences without premisses” (*E* 2p28d), and

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<sup>105</sup> “We mistake the more for the less, we behave as though nonbeing existed before being, disorder before order and the possible before existence. As though being came to fill in a void, order to organize a preceding disorder, the real to realize a primary possibility. Being, order or the existent are truth itself; but in the false problem there is a fundamental illusion, a ‘retrograde movement of the true,’ according to which being, order and the existent are supposed to precede themselves, or to precede the creative act that constitutes them, by projecting an image of themselves back into a possibility, a disorder, a nonbeing which are supposed to be primordial. This theme is a central one in Bergson’s philosophy: It sums up his critique of the negative and of negation, in all its forms as sources of false problems.” (*Bergsonism* 18)

thus never pertain to the essence of God or Nature, so that people cannot but form such relative illusions as order and disorder, according to their desire and expectations. But once we, by making the *epistemological break* with the concatenation of inadequate ideas, successfully form “*notiones communes*” [common notions] as the first *adequate* ideas that express God’s essence (the Second Kind of Knowledge), we are bearers of the true knowledge of the positive Order of Nature (which, in turn, necessarily leads us to the Third Kind of Knowledge (*scientia intuitiva*), but that does not concern us here). This immanent Order of Nature, whose knowledge is acquired through “*notiones communes*” and against which “*imaginatio*” shores the illusions of order and disorder, is indeed the *form* as well as the content of Spinoza’s *Ethics*, which is, as the subtitle goes, “demonstrated in geometrical order”, while containing “a discontinuous volcanic line” of scholia – thus, Deleuze describes it as “a book written twice simultaneously”.<sup>106</sup> Macherey, explicating Deleuze’s idea of “expression”, refers to this Deleuzo-Spinozist “double reading”:

The idea of expression works, then, by serving a hermeneutic role, revealing a secret; through it we are to see how the outwardly linear discourse of the *Ethics* actually proceeds on two different levels at once, explicitly on the level of a demonstrative rationality proclaiming its unbroken necessary progression, and then beneath the surface, where we find the concrete realm of the affects that traverse this progression, restoring its deeper sense in an apparently disordered (but in fact differently ordered) succession of sudden flashes, and preparing the way for the final integration of concepts and affects that becomes the dominant theme of a Spinozism understood in terms of the concept of expression.

(“Encounter” 143)

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<sup>106</sup> “The *Ethics* is a book written twice simultaneously: once in the continuous stream of definitions, propositions, demonstrations, and corollaries, which develop the great speculative themes with all the rigors of the mind; another time in the broken chain of scholia, a discontinuous volcanic line, a second version underneath the first, expressing all the angers of the heart and setting forth the practical theses of denunciation and liberation.” (*Practical* 28-29)

Although Bergson is unnamed here, the parallel is more than obvious – the “geometrical order” of “a demonstrative rationality” (concepts) and the “apparently disordered (but in fact differently ordered) succession of sudden flashes” (affects) are nothing but Bergson’s “two species of order”. Furthermore, “the final integration of concepts and affects” is also the dominant theme of Bergson’s differentiation-integration method,<sup>107</sup> or what Boundas terms “Deleuze-Bergson’s controlled pluralism”, whose formula is “pluralism = monism” (97).<sup>108</sup> After all, it is all about the Whole, the Real – Spinoza’s “*Deus sive Natura*” or Bergson’s “*durée*” – that is not “given” but “virtual”, so that, from this monistic perspective, “two orders” and “no order” do not make any *real* difference, as they are only two modes of addressing, by way of exposing, the relative illusions of order and disorder and of critiquing – to use the Althusserian definition of ideology – “the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (“Ideology” 123).

Now it seems fair to surmise that, when Eliot read Spinoza’s passage concerning the illusions of order and disorder, he must have been reminded of Bergson’s discussion of the “two species of order” and critique of the “pseudo-idea” of “disorder”. It goes without saying that the issue of pseudo-ideas or illusions, caused by *actual* privation of the true knowledge as regards the *real = virtual*<sup>109</sup> order of things (*ordo rerum*), is akin to Bradley’s fundamental *problematic* concerning “Appearance” and “Reality”, and, by

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<sup>107</sup> “In this sense the task of the philosopher, as we understand it, closely resembles that of the mathematician who determines a function by starting from the differential. The final effort of philosophical research is a true work of integration.” (MM 242); See also Thibaudet: “Bergsonism is not a dualism, and Bergson himself believes in the unity of order. The two orders take place in response to one movement, and one forms the inversion – tension or detension – of the other. But the term “order” is for philosophers a general term, which they decompose into principles.” (*Bergsonisme* 145; my translation)

<sup>108</sup> Cf. “We invoke one dualism only in order to challenge another. We employ a dualism of models in order to arrive at a process that challenges all models. Each time, mental correctives are necessary to undo the dualisms we had no wish to construct but through which we pass. Arrive at the magic formula we all seek – PLURALISM = MONISM – via all the dualisms that are the enemy, an entirely necessary enemy, the furniture we are forever rearranging.” (Deleuze et al. *Thousand* 20-1)

<sup>109</sup> Cf. “The virtual is opposed not to the real but to the actual. *The virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual*” (Deleuze, *Difference* 208). As for the Spinozian-Bergsonian-Deleuzian concept of the “Virtual Whole” and its significance in our argument, see below.



extension, that of Indo-Buddhist thoughts, especially Nagarjuna's. Even without all these philosophical associations, however, it is just as possible that the word "*Ordinem*" simply caught the acute eyes of young Eliot – in fact, in the Latin text Eliot owned, this word, capitalized and italicized, stands out on the page – who was obsessed with the idea of Order all through his life. Besides – let me add just one more tangential "evidence" – Bergson, right after the passage quoted above as a possible candidate for Eliot's association, goes on with analysis of "the idea of chance, which is closely akin to the idea of disorder", by giving the following illustration: "when the wholly mechanical force of the wind tears a tile off the roof and throws it on to my head, that is to say acts like a bad genius, conspiring against my person" (246-7). How can an avid reader help recalling here Spinoza's famous parable of a stone falling on a passer-by (which proves mortal in Spinoza's case, though) in the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*?

### **epistemologico-critical Bergson**

In short, we are here dealing with *critical* rather than *mystical* Bergson – or, I might as well put it, *epistemological* (i.e., "the theory of knowledge", as it was commonly called at that time) rather than *ontological* (hence, *creative* or *artistic*). It seems in hindsight that, in the Anglo-American reception of Bergson's philosophy in the early twentieth century, the latter was unproportionally emphasized both by the detractors (Bertrand Russell or Wyndham Lewis) and admirers (William James or John Middleton Murry) alike, perhaps due to the fact that, unlike France, there was not much of the Catholic context involved – i.e., the Catholic revival against positive materialism ("the desert of scientism" (Grogin *Bergsonian* 145)) on the one hand, and the theological controversy between modernism and

Thomism on the other.<sup>110</sup> To put it another way, it seems as if those Anglo-Saxon anti-/pro-Bergsonians had only read the first two chapters of *Creative Evolution* (*élan vital*, evolutionism, the “eye of the Pecten”,<sup>111</sup> etc.), and not the latter half (where discussion of the “two species of order” develops into epistemological critique of the pseudo-ideas of “disorder”, “nought” [*néant*], and “immutability”, which, in turn, leads to the “sketch of a criticism of [past] philosophical systems”). J. M. Murry’s enthusiasm is typical of the artistic rather than philosophical reception of Bergsonism among Eliot’s contemporaries,<sup>112</sup> and is indeed particularly significant, in that Eliot, who had been exposed to Bergson’s influence at more or less the same time as Murry, was to establish his critical standpoint, to a large extent, against Murry’s.<sup>113</sup> See, for example, the following outpouring of words in Murry’s letter to his Oxford friend P. Landon (April 1911), concerning the prospect of his new journal, *Rhythm*:

Modernism means, when I use it, Bergsonism in Philosophy – that is a really *Creative Evolution* with only in the end an Intuition to put the individual at its

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<sup>110</sup> The case of Jacques Maritain is exemplary of this conjuncture. He is well known as one of the most relentless critics of Bergsonism from the Thomistic point of view, but when he was in spiritual crisis in youth, Bergson’s lectures were, for him, the only path left for him as well as his wife and friends to escape from “the desert of scientism”. In his *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, with all his trenchant refutation of the fundamentals of Bergsonism, he nevertheless recounts Bergson’s “great merit”: “Bergson has the great merit of having for a long time struggled alone (alone in the French University) against the so-called positive materialism and against the Kantian relativism which were dividing the academic world between them” (119). It is, in passing, interesting to note that Charles Péguy saw in the affair between Bergson and Julien Benda, by far the most relentless and persistent critic of Bergsonism, “the old quarrel between the Alexandrian and Rabbinical Jews” (Grogin 180).

<sup>111</sup> Eliot sarcastically lets Appleplex (Pound’s alter ego) say, “Mrs. Howexden recommends me to read Bergson. He writes very entertainingly on the structure of the eye of the frog” (“Eeldrop I” 10).

<sup>112</sup> Cf. “Murry’s interpretation of what Bergson should mean to English poetry was in some ways like Hulme’s and both marked out the direction to be taken by imagism. Essential to all three views is a belief in art, in poetry, as the expression of a higher realism. . . Truth was present, empirical; the artist’s direct intuition of the object (mental or physical) and his presentation of it by image and analogy could be the occasion for an intuition of essential reality by the reader.” (Pondrom 15)

<sup>113</sup> As for a most insightful and exhaustive study of the “critical difference” between Eliot and Murry, see Goldie. Also see Harding (*Criterion*), who places this rivalry in a wider context of the periodical networks in Inter-War Britain.

heart roots; and intuition which is the raising of Personality to the nth degree, a conscious concentration of vision. This I cannot pause to enlarge on now. I hope next term every week to have a gathering of those people who are really heart and soul with us, who stand for Progress in a real sense in Art matters, whereat we can discuss matters. Incidentally it does touch politics very very intimately and I am a yellow Syndicalist; that too I can't explain. (qt. Lea 24)

For Murry, "Bergsonism in Philosophy" is no philosophy, but a creative principle. In fact, with his terms like "raising of Personality" or "conscious concentration of vision" as well as his confession of inability to explain, the above passage sounds precariously close to the language of occultism, prevalent at that time.<sup>114</sup>

In France, on the other hand, there has been a firm tradition of balanced philosophical appreciations as well as critiques of Bergson ever since the earliest days. Take, for instance, Jacques Chevalier, who was himself a renowned Catholic philosopher and also a long-time friend and pious follower – some might say, protégé – of Bergson. Today, Chevalier is perhaps only remembered as the interlocutor in the invaluable *Entretiens avec Bergson*, or, rather infamously, as a Minister of the Vichy government, but, at Bergson's death in 1941, he was named, together with Édouard Le Roy, Léon Brunschvicg, Jean Wahl, Vladimir Jankélévitch, and several other celebrities, as an executor of Bergson's will. In 1924, Chevalier gave a series of lectures on the philosophy of Bergson in the holiday courses for foreign students given by Grenoble University, which was made into a book, under Bergson's characteristically over-cautious and meticulous supervision, in 1926 and was translated into English two years later. In its introduction he makes clear the standpoint of what I have just called "balanced" philosophical appreciations of Bergson:

Bergsonism, either for purposes of praise or blame, has been qualified as anti-intellectualism, pure intuitionism, radical indeterminism, idealism, and who

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<sup>114</sup> Leon Surette successfully tells the *other* story of literary Modernism by relocating occultism at its center (*Birth*). More specifically for Eliot and mysticism, see Childs, *Mystic*.

knows what besides; and certainly there is something of all these in his doctrine. But there is a good deal else, and if in order to express his original and fundamental view of things, Bergson was led by current ideas, and his milieu and his times, to take the part of intuition, liberty, and duration, against conceptual intelligence, determinism, and mechanism, he has none the less not denied the theses he opposed. He merely denied that which is exaggeration in them and if we lose sight of this we distort his doctrine. (xvii – xviii)

In fact, Chevalier places Bergson in the “intellectual” tradition of French philosophy and beyond:

Humanity needs metaphysics. Metaphysics it is that Bergson brings us, and his metaphysics is a positive or verifiable one. Here Bergson, pondering over the French tradition and carrying it forward, joins the great thinkers from whom it issued. . . Besides, Bergson goes back beyond these admirable thinkers [Descartes and Pascal] and splices on to the older human tradition. He takes up the thread again of the intellectual discipline initiated by Aristotle . . . Following in their line, but in a new and original way, Bergson has endeavored to expand the resources of human thought in its search for the infinite. He has not dethroned the intellect; he has spiritualized it. He has not repudiated science; he has corrected it, and he has opposed the pseudo-metaphysics which calls itself science, by facts. (328-9)

For Chevalier, as for Bergson himself, Bergsonian philosophy is not at all “anti-intellectual”, but rather “supra-intellectual”,<sup>115</sup> that is to say, it intends to overcome narrow intellectualism by means of its intransigent critique. In this respect, it is natural

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<sup>115</sup> In a letter to Chevalier (April 28<sup>th</sup> 1920), Bergson writes, “In taking the term ‘intellect’ in the wide sense given to it by Kant, I can call the intuition of which I speak ‘intellectual.’ But I should prefer to call it ‘supra-intellectual,’ because I have felt bound to restrict the meaning of the term ‘intellect’ and reserve it for the whole of the discursive faculties of the mind, originally destined to think matter. Intuition bears upon spirit” (qt. Chevalier *Bergson* 326). The phrase, “a supra-intellectual intuition”, has already been used in *Creative Evolution* (380).

for those French Bergsonians to emphasize, in their expositions of *Creative Evolution*, not only the ontological vision of *élan vital*, but also the epistemological critique of the pseudo-ideas of “disorder”, “nought”, and “immutability” – in fact, Bergson himself has already insisted in the Introduction to *Creative Evolution* that “*theory of knowledge [la théorie de la connaissance] and theory of life [la théorie de la vie] seem to us inseparable*” (CE xiii; Bergson’s italics). The following “philosophical” perspective laid out in Albert Thibaudet’s epochal 1923 exposition in two volumes, *Le Bergsonisme*, should then be read in this vein:

Philosophy is, however, the science of Reality. Will we then be innately incapable of philosophizing, attaining Reality? No. . . . Every philosophy begins, logically, with a critique of natural illusions – one passes over such a critique by dogmatism, another dwells in it by scepticism, and yet another organizes it by criticism – and they see these illusions caused by senses, understanding, or reason. Whether one is Platonist or not, an allegory of the cave or a theory of the *idola* becomes the threshold, the narthex of all philosophical speculations. With Bergson, as with Bacon, we can distinguish four fundamental illusions that a philosopher will have to surmount. Those are, according to Bergson, the illusions of dissection [morcelage], nought [néant], disorder [désordre], and principles [principes]. (121; my translation; Thibaudet’s italics)

He then devotes a whole chapter (Ch. 3) to “La Logique de l’Illusion”, and explicates the above four illusions. In his exposition of the illusion of disorder, Thibaudet rightly calls attention to Bergson’s emphasis on its epistemological significance: “It is . . . with the criticism of this idea [of disorder] that a theory of knowledge ought to begin, for if the great problem is to know why and how reality submits itself to an order, it is because the absence of every kind of order appears possible or conceivable” (qt. Thibaudet 144; CE 232).

Among those earliest expositions of Bergson’s philosophy by young French Bergsonians, Vladimir Jankélévitch’s “Prolégomènes au Bergsonisme” (1928) is of

particular significance in our context, not only because it was designated by Jacques Maritain, the strongest Thomist (or “intellectualist”) critic of Bergson, as “one of the best expositions that have ever been made of Bergsonism from Bergson’s own point of view” (*Bergsonian* 45), but also, more importantly, because Jankélévitch connects the prime significance of Bergson’s epistemological critique of the pseudo-ideas of “disorder” and “nought” to Spinozism. Jankélévitch begins the final section of his prolegomena, “Le Néant des Concepts et le Plein de l’Esprit”, as follows:

*Critique of the ideas of disorder and nought is key to Bergsonism.* M. Bergson has devoted to this problem some admirable pages that are perhaps among the most profound and perplexing that a philosopher has ever written. We have been obliged to hint, so to speak, that critique all along, because the three problems of the penetrating effort [of intellection], of freedom, and of finality implicitly draw a solution from it. (“Prolégomènes” 477; my translation; Jankélévitch’s italics; the same passage is also found in *Bergson* 200 with alteration.)

In order to elaborate on this “key” Bergsonian critique, Jankélévitch rightly directs the readers’ attention to Bergson’s recent discussion with regard to the pseudo-idea of the “possible” in the Oxford lecture in 1920, “La Prévision et la Nouveauté”, which was then little known to the French public, until it was later developed into the famous essay, “Le Possible et le Réel”, collected in *La Pensée et le Mouvant* in 1938. Of course, Jankélévitch, in his 1928 prolegomena, was not able to refer to “The Possible and the Real”, but if he could, he would have followed Bergson’s argument that “the great metaphysical problems are in general badly stated, [so] that they frequently resolve themselves of their own accord when correctly stated, or else are problems formulated in terms of illusion which disappear as soon as the terms of the formula are more closely examined” (*CM* 77), and that those “agonizing problems of metaphysics” can be reduced to two illusions: that of nothing [*Rien*], which “gave rise to theories of being” and that of disorder, which gave rise

“to theories of knowledge” (78) – these two illusions “are in reality only one” (80), as both are fundamentally related to the pseudo-idea of the “possible”. At this point, Jankélévitch dares to *spinozize* Bergson – certainly against Bergson’s own will<sup>116</sup>:

Spinoza has submitted the idea of the possible to critique that, in many respects, anticipates that of M. Bergson. On that point, M. Albert Thibaudet is not deceived in the most insightful chapter [i.e., Ch. 3 “The Logic of Illusion”, mentioned above] of his exposition, but it is, dare we say, M. Bergson himself who perhaps hasn’t done full justice to Spinozist intuitions [Jankélévitch’s footnote: “I am here inspired by the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*”] . . . . Pseudo-philosophers need a void of this kind [i.e., that which makes destructive *aporias* possible] to authorize the superstition of finality. And it is the same, according to Spinoza, for such relative prejudices as Good and Evil, Beautiful and Ugly, Order and Disorder, Virtue and Vice, as well as for all our complaints, recriminations, praises, and blames. (“Prolégomènes” 485-6; my translation; the same passage is found in *Bergson* 222 with alteration.)

Jankélévitch goes even further – beyond the above association of Spinoza and Bergson in their common epistemological (or, *à la* Althusser, “ideological”) critique, towards a “transposition” that transfigures Spinoza’s universe into Bergson’s – a kind of ontological insight that indeed anticipates Deleuze:

Before the philosophy of intuition [of Bergson], the philosophy of geometrical order [of Spinoza] has emphasized the relativity of the *ordo-confusio* opposition; in solidarity, these two thinkers relate the idea of order to the peripheries of our spirit – imagination [*imaginatio*] in Spinoza and utilitarian intelligence in Bergson. Imagination, fascinated with the schematism of language, articulates the unique

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<sup>116</sup> Apart from the critical analysis of the systems of Spinoza and Leibniz in Chapter Four of *Creative Evolution*, Bergson, at every whipstitch, took pains in denying any association of his philosophy with Spinozism in private conversation with Chevalier (*Entretiens passim.*), as his philosophy, especially that explicated in *Creative Evolution*, was often suspected or accused, by Maritain and others, of being Spinozan heresy (i.e., pantheism).

phenomenon that is world history into dramatic and discontinuous events. It fears plenitude of the spirit and ventilates itself through voids and ruptures; it assigns to everything a *beginning* and an *end*; it is creationist and it is finalist. We need to make, on the contrary [to our common perception], only a transposition, in order to pass from the impassible universe of Spinoza to the qualified universe of Bergson. Both divert from nought of concepts towards plenitude of the mind [l'esprit]. Both invite us to comprehend, where fanatics admire like fools. . . *Ut doctus intelligere, non autem ut stultus admirari.* ("Prolégomènes" 487; my translation; Jankélévitch's italics; the identical passage is found in *Bergson* 223.)

Perhaps not so far as such an insight, or "intuition", into the ontological, proto-Deleuzian "transposition", Eliot has at least arrived, I contend, at recognition of what I would like to call the "epistemologico-critical" aspect of Bergson and Spinoza, whose association finds its *loci classici* in the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*, especially the critique of the "prejudices" (i.e., illusions, or pseudo-ideas) concerning *Ordo* and *Confusio* on the one hand, and in Chapters 3 & 4 of *Creative Evolution*, especially the critique of "the idea of *disorder*" with which "a theory of knowledge ought to begin" (*CE* 232) on the other. In other words, such association did, in my theory, occur to Eliot, just as it would later do to Jankélévitch, when he came across the passage concerning the illusions of *Ordo* and *Confusio* in the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics* – independently, of course, of the later development of French Bergsonism, but, to a significant degree, in parallel with it.

It would, however, be gross misrepresentation if we suggested that such an epistemologico-critical reading of Bergsonian philosophy belonged only to the French and was wholly non-existent in Anglo-American reception, which, in turn, ought to be considered with regard to possible sources of inspiration for Eliot's "enigmatic note". Apart from William James' enthusiastic promotion of Bergson's intellect-renouncing philosophy, which was cut short by his death in 1910 before the publication of the English



translation of *Creative Evolution*<sup>117</sup> and Bergson's successful debut in the British lecture halls in 1911, perhaps the most influential essay on Bergson at this earlier stage of English reception was Arthur Balfour's for *The Hibbert Journal* (Oct. 1911), partly due to his eminent status as a public figure. The gist of this lengthy appreciation is, however, quite simple: Bergson shows the way out of the then-prevalent naturalism (positive materialism) and idealism (mostly neo-Kantian), and this new way should ultimately lead to God. Let me quote the most revealing paragraph:

It is true that [Bergson] has left naturalism far behind[.] His theory of a primordial super-consciousness, not less than his theory of freedom, separates him from this school of thought as decisively as his theory of duration, with its corollary of an ever-growing and developing reality, divides him from the great idealists. It is true also that, according to my view, his metaphysic is religious: since I deem the important philosophic distinction between religious and non-religious metaphysic to be that God, or whatever in the system corresponds to God, does in the former *take sides* in a moving drama, while, with more consistency, but far less truth, he is, in the non-religious system, represented as indifferently related to all the multiplicity of which he constitutes the unity.

(22; Balfour's italics)

Balfour shares a more or less similar view with Chevalier and, with certain scrupulous reservation, with Bergson himself that *Creative Evolution* has implicit proclivity towards the Christian God, but Balfour, "a distinguished dabbler in metaphysics,"<sup>118</sup> does not seem

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<sup>117</sup> "In the writing of this English translation of Professor Bergson's most important work, I was helped by the friendly interest of Professor William James, to whom I owe the illumination of much that was dark to me as well as the happy rendering of certain words and phrases for which an English equivalent was difficult to find. His sympathetic appreciation of Professor Bergson's thought is well known, and he has expressed his admiration for it in one of the chapters of *A Pluralistic Universe*. It was his intention, had he lived to see the completion of this translation, himself to introduce it to English readers in a prefatory note" (the incipit of Arthur Mitachell's "Translator's Note", *CE* v). Had James lived to write this prefatory note, the Anglo-American reception of Bergson would certainly have been quite different.

<sup>118</sup> Eliot's words in 1924 ("Prediction" 29).

to possess sufficient discipline to give it a philosophical shape. Instead, he merely appeals, throughout the essay, to such vague concepts as “a primordial super-consciousness”, while making such an unfounded statement as: “[Bergson’s theory’s] foundations lie far deeper than the natural sciences can dig” (20). T. E. Hulme, who had already been writing enthusiastically on “The New Philosophy”<sup>119</sup> of Bergson in a small literary journal *New Age*, commented sarcastically on “some remarkable effects”<sup>120</sup> of Balfour’s essay. In short, it was the journalistic success, rather than the philosophical content, that was “remarkable” about that essay by the former Prime Minister.

Much more interesting is, however, the following passage in another *New Age* article by Hulme, in which he scathingly attacks E. B. Bax’s misguided criticism against Bergson:

Mr. Bax complains that he fails to find in Bergson any distinct pronouncement on the fundamental problem of the ‘Theory of Knowledge’. Now, it seems to me that in the third chapter of ‘*Evolution Créatrice*’ and the first chapter of ‘*Matière et Mémoire*’ taken together, you have complete materials for such a theory. I ask myself what it is that Mr. Bax expects and that he finds wanting here, and I think I can supply an answer. He looks for, and naturally does not find, a ‘Theory of Knowledge’ in the Kantian sense of the word. What is so difficult for a man who has been brought up in one epoch of philosophy and lives on into the beginning of the next to understand is this, that not only are there new answers to old questions, but in many cases the old questions cease to have any interest and any meaning for the next generation. (“Bax” 121)

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<sup>119</sup> “The New Philosophy” (*New Age*, July 1909) is Hulme’s first published article and, by curious coincidence, a review of *A Pluralistic Universe*, “[t]his last book of Mr. James” (86). In this review-essay, Hulme emphasizes “the particular method of this reaction [against the abuse of Conceptualism], in which lies [Bergson’s] extreme originality” and “the positive constructive part of Bergson, as distinguished from the destructive criticism of intellectualism” (86-7, 87).

<sup>120</sup> Cf. “Paris is only seven hours’ journey from here, and there must have been quite a considerable number of people who for several years have known that Bergson was an important person, but it was necessary for Mr. Balfour to write an article, for him to become famous. Really this article has had some remarkable effects. It has produced four columns about Bergson in the ‘Evening Times’, references in the ‘Referee’, and an article in the ‘Saturday Review’.” (Hulme, “Mr. Balfour, Bergson, and Politics” (Nov. 1911) 160).

Hulme here deliberately makes it a generational issue and, according to Lee Garver, a feminist issue as well,<sup>121</sup> but, its political connotations aside, what is of great interest is that Bax – then, if not now, a renowned philosopher<sup>122</sup> and self-styled anti-intellectualist, who claims to have preceded Bergson for that matter – criticizes Bergson for lack of the “Theory of Knowledge” and that the insolent young man, in turn, suggests the elder philosopher read the third chapter of *Creative Evolution*, that is, the chapter entitled “On the Meaning of Life – the Order of Nature and the Form of Intelligence”, in which the above-quoted discussion over the pseudo-idea of disorder is made. Rather negligible as this sideshow may be in the history of Anglo-American reception of Bergson, it seems to suggest that it was the theory of knowledge (i.e., epistemology), rather than J. M. Murry’s “raising of Personality to the nth degree”, that was at issue in the “philosophical” reception of Bergson in Britain.

In fact, one of the very earliest introductions of Bergson to the Anglo-American audiences was entitled “Bergson’s Theory of Knowledge”, written by H. Wildon Carr and published in the influential *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* just a year after *l’Évolution Créatrice* was published in France. H. Wildon Carr, who begins this article by proposing “to put before you as briefly and concisely as I can some of the more striking theories set forth in the recent book of Professor Bergson, *Evolution Créatrice*” (41), states: “[Bergson] declares the idea of nothing [and disorder] to be impossible. It is this part of his argument that appears to me the most striking and novel” (49). H. Wildon Carr, who was a long-time Honorary Secretary of the Aristotelian Society (later President), was to

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<sup>121</sup> “E. Belfort Bax was an executive in the Marxist Social Democratic Federation and a former associate of William Morris. He was also a regular contributor to the *New Age* and the magazine’s resident anti-feminist, often single-handedly upholding this unpopular position against a range of hostile critics. In reviewing Bax’s work, Hulme knew that readers would be aware of his opposition to women’s enfranchisement, and he had great fun in tracing the flaws of Bax’s philosophy to its anti-feminism, most notably its resistance to intuition” (Garver 143). This analysis provides an interesting gender-line for the issue of Anglo-American antagonism against Bergsonian influence.

<sup>122</sup> Ironical or not, Hulme claims that he has “always regarded the ‘Roots of Reality’ [by Bax] as being one of the most important books on philosophy that has appeared in English since Bradley’s ‘Appearance and Reality’” (“Bax” 118).

become one of the most high-ranking, ardent English apologists for Bergson – as is already mentioned above, he was the one who replied to Russell’s criticism against Bergson. In 1911, he published a widely-read, pocket-size *Henri Bergson: The Philosophy of Change*, in which he again renders “the most striking and novel” argument in the theory of knowledge as regards order and disorder – this time in plain language:

The reality is both a material order and an intellectual order. The difficulty we find in accepting this important conclusion is due to an illusion of thought. We persist in thinking that order is something imposed on reality, and that without an imposed order there would be a disorder. The idea of disorder is purely relative to our interest; it is the absence of the order that we are seeking. The absence of an order we expect to find is the presence of a different order. (85)

Eliot, in fact, listed H. Wildon Carr’s *Bergson*, of all the books on Bergson available at that time, as a recommended book in the syllabus of his Oxford Extension lectures on modern French literature in 1916 (Schuchard *Dark* 31). So it is possible that Eliot’s memory of reading Bergson from an epistemological point of view was refreshed by this particular book – if so, the proximate source for Eliot’s reception of epistemologico-critical Bergson may have been Anglo-Saxon, after all.

In any case, it is fair to conclude that, while Eliot as a poet-critic detested “mixture” of philosophy and art,<sup>123</sup> typically found in Bergsonian sentiments in various contemporary art movements (as in the above-quoted letter of J. M. Murry), Eliot as a philosopher was well aware of the other vein of Bergsonian heritage, i.e., epistemologico-critical Bergson.

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<sup>123</sup> Cf. Eliot’s letter to Pound (Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1915): “I distrust and detest Aesthetics, when it cuts loose from the Object, and vapours in the void, but you have not done that. The closer one keeps to the Artist’s discussion of his technique the better, I think, and the only kind of art worth talking about is the art one happens to like. There can be no contemplative or easychair aesthetics, I think; only the aesthetics of the person who is about to do something. I was fearful lest you should hitch it up to Bergson or James or some philosopher, and was relieved to find that Vorticism was not a philosophy” (*LI* 94).

It is true that Eliot later became a vocal critic of Bergsonian anti-intellectualism, drawing much on Julien Benda's rationalist critique and Jacques Maritain's Thomistic refutation,<sup>124</sup> so that he denounced, in his Clark Lectures in 1926, Bergsonian anti-intellectual mysticism as opposed to the Aristotelian-Thomistic "religious mysticism" – in the latter, "the analytic intellect took part" and which was "consummated in Dante's time".<sup>125</sup> But if we turned back the clock to the years 1914-1916, when he was engaged in a philosophical dissertation, and looked at the issue from the perspective of the young Eliot, whose project was, roughly speaking, to criticize the apparent rivalries between realists and idealists in the theory of knowledge by deconstructing the distinction of "real" and "ideal", it shouldn't be too hard to imagine that Eliot immediately found a clear expression of his "entirely destructive"<sup>126</sup> project in Bergson's deconstructive critique of the very foundation of both realist and idealist epistemologies, thus going beyond realism and idealism. In fact, Jean Wahl later recollects the impact of Bergson's *Matter and Memory* as "something unheard of at that moment in philosophy, an effort to go beyond the two opposed doctrines [i.e., realism and

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<sup>124</sup> E.g., in 1928 – the year Eliot made the (in)famous declaration, "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion" (*FLA* ix) – he chose Benda's *La Trahison des Clercs* and Maritain's *Three Reformers* for reviews in *TLS* ("Culture and Anarchy" (Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> 1928) and "Three Reformers" (Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> 1928)), and in both reviews he emphasized their reaction against Bergsonism, as well as against "Romanticism in literature" and "democracy in Government" ("Three Reformers" 818).

<sup>125</sup> "There is a type of religious mysticism which found expression in the twelfth century, and which is taken up into the system of Aquinas. Its origin is in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle 1072b and elsewhere, and in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and it is the opposite of Bergsonism. You know how the Absolute of Bergson is arrived at: by a turning back on the path of thought, by divesting one's mind of the apparatus of distinction and analysis, by plunging into the flow of immediate experience. For twelfth century, the divine vision or enjoyment of God could only be attained by a process in which the analytic intellect took part; it was through and by and beyond discursive thought that man could arrive at beatitude. This was the form of mysticism consummated in Dante's time" (*VMP* 99).

<sup>126</sup> In his letter to Norbert Wiener (Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> 1915), Eliot describes his dissertation in progress as follows: "It's about Bradley's theory of judgment, and I think the second version will be entirely destructive. I shall attack first 'Reality' second 'Idea' or ideal content, and then try to show sufficient reason for attempting to get along without any theory of judgment whatsoever. In other words, there are many objects in the world (I say many, as if one could draw a sharp line, though in point of fact it is degree everywhere) which can be handled as things sufficiently for ordinary purposes, but not *exactly* enough to be subject matter for a science – no definition of judgment, that is, is formally either right or wrong; and it simply is a waste of time to define judgment at all" (*LI* 89).

idealism]” (152). Eliot the fledgling philosopher was no doubt struck by this “impact”, and, though he soon moved from Bergson to Bradley, his epistemologico-critical project in the last phase of “academic philosophizing”, as I argue in the following chapter, stayed on this line – that is to say, Eliot’s fundamental *problematic* remains, with all the different philosophers he tackled with, to be how to go beyond the realism-idealism dichotomy. But, for now, suffice it to say that the key to going beyond this dichotomy in *Creative Evolution* lies in the critique of the pseudo-idea of *disorder*,<sup>127</sup> and that it is in this context that Eliot’s “enigmatic note” found in the margins of the Appendix to Part I of Spinoza’s *Ethics* is to be understood.

Such is the conclusion of this chapter – a rather neat one to our speculation over the “enigmatic note”. However, there still remains a question – the real enigma – of Eliot’s “traumatic” experience of a temporary conversion / submission to Spinoza + Bergson. What was it, beneath the epistemologico-critical association Eliot would likely have made during his conscious “academic philosophizing”, that made all those sporadic, almost

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<sup>127</sup> Cf. “we shall see what a prominent part the idea of *disorder* plays in problems relative to the theory of knowledge. It does not appear explicitly, and that is why it escapes our attention. It is, however, with the criticism of this idea that a theory of knowledge ought to begin, for if the great problem is to know why and how reality submits itself to an order, it is because the absence of every kind of order appears possible or conceivable. It is this absence of order that realists and idealists alike believe they are thinking of, – the realist when he speaks of the regularity that “objective” laws actually impose on a virtual disorder of nature, the idealist when he supposes a “sensuous manifold” which is coördinated (and consequently itself without order) under the influence of our understanding. The idea of disorder, in the sense of *absence of order*, is then what must be analysed first.” (CE 232-3); “The main problem of the theory of knowledge is to know how science is possible, that is to say, in effect, why there is order and not disorder in things. That order exists is a *fact*. But, on the other hand, disorder, *which appears to us to be less than order*, is, it seems, of *right*. The existence of order is then a mystery to be cleared up, at any rate a problem to be solved. More simply, when we undertake to found order, we regard it as contingent, if not in things, at least as viewed by the mind: of a thing that we do not judge to be contingent we do not require an explanation. If order did not appear to us as a conquest over something, or as an addition to something (which something is thought to be the “absence of order”), ancient realism would not have spoken of a “matter” to which the Idea superadded itself, nor would modern idealism have supposed a “sensuous manifold” that the understanding organizes into nature.” (CE 244-5)

*rhizomic*, Spinoza + Bergson intrusions into Eliot's texts so compelling, as if the *other* order subsisted *vitally*, *virtually*, or *unconsciously*? By definition, such *coupures* (hiatuses and connections) would not be positively explained, so that we may only guess that this overwhelming question would probably be *ontological* rather than *epistemological*, having something to do with "philosophical intuition" rather than epistemological critique. Having said that, however, we can still listen to an acute critic with great intuitive insight, such as R. P. Blackmur, who seems able to cast an eye on this critical question. Here is Blackmur's overall judgment – unfounded, intuitive, yet insightful – of Eliot's fundamental psychic structure (already quoted above as the epigraph of this chapter):

What I am saying is that Eliot's great concern with order and tradition and hierarchy is in part a result of his direct and constant perception of disorder or of unknowable orders. He knows that human orders are what you do with disorder; he knows that no order remains vital which has lost its intimate contact, at some point, with the disorder or the unknown order which gave it rise. (*Lion* 163)

The phrase, "the disorder or the unknown order", may suggest that Blackmur has Bergson in mind, but here it is not Bergson's epistemological critique of the pseudo-idea of disorder that is at issue, but Eliot's "direct and constant perception" of it – and such an "intimate contact" with the disorder or the unknown order is, according to Blackmur, what keeps the order "vital".<sup>128</sup> Later in the same essay, Blackmur, rather aphoristically, writes: "Poetry sees beneath beauty and ugliness: it sees the boredom, the horror, and the glory. The

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<sup>128</sup> Cf. Interestingly enough, Frank Kermode holds a similar view: "Eliot certainly has the marks of a modern kind of greatness, those beneficial intuitions of irregularity and chaos, the truth of the foul rag-and-bone shop. Yet we remember him as celebrating order. Over the years he explored the implications of his attitudes to order, and it is doubtful whether many people capable of understanding him now have much sympathy with his views. His greatness will rest on the fruitful recognition of disorder, though the theories will have their interest as theories held by a great man" (*Modern* 307).

incarnation of poetry is deep” (174) – this is, it perhaps goes without saying, a liberal quotation from Eliot,<sup>129</sup> and also, I dare maintain, touches upon the very essence of Spinoza’s *Ethics* (in contradistinction to Morality<sup>130</sup>). Where Philosophy critiques the relative, or *apparent*, prejudices (such as Good and Evil, Beautiful and Ugly, Order and Disorder, Virtue and Vice, and so on, as listed in the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*), Poetry (and Ethics) intuitively grasps that which lies beneath them – *durée réelle*, *Deus sive Natura*, or whatever name you attribute to the *virtual=real* Whole. Hence, whereas he has successfully connected Spinoza and Bergson in epistemological terms, Eliot the philosopher finds, as we will see in the ensuing chapters, “great difficulty” in comprehending Spinoza’s God in ontological terms. In this respect, Eliot’s dramatic pronouncement in an already-quoted letter to Norbert Wiener during his composition of the doctoral dissertation (Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> 1915), is indeed suggestive: “I am quite ready to admit that the lesson of relativism is: to avoid philosophy and devote oneself to either *real* art or *real* science. (For philosophy is an unloved guest in either company)” (LI 88).

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<sup>129</sup> “We mean all sorts of things, I know, by Beauty. But the essential advantage for a poet is not, to have a beautiful world with which to deal: it is to be able to see beneath both beauty and ugliness; to see the boredom, and the horror, and the glory” (UPUC 106).

<sup>130</sup> See Deleuze *Practical* Ch. 2 “On the Difference between the *Ethics* and a Morality”.



## ***Chapter Three***

### **“La grosse difficulté de Spinoza” (I)**

La grosse difficulté de Spinoza: comment une idée  
au dehors de Dieu peut être adéquate.

La grosse difficulté c’est que le mode n’est pas le même  
dans l’être qu’il est dans dieu; il est plus ou moins gâté.

La vraie difficulté (de Sp.) c’est se représenter comment  
toute existence ne coïncide pas avec son essence.

Sp. n’a pas expliqué comment il y a autre chose que l’éternel, c’est la grosse difficulté

--- T. S. Eliot’s handwritten note

When you open Eliot’s copy of Spinoza’s *Opera* in the Archive Centre of King’s College, Cambridge University, the first thing you will encounter is the above general comments on – or, rather, complaints with – Spinoza, handwritten on a blank page. This and the ensuing chapters attempt to analyze the “great difficulty” Eliot has found in Spinoza, by way of reproducing Eliot’s reading of the *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* and the *Ethics* as fully and faithfully as can be learnt from his underlines and marginal notes, in the hope that this examination of Eliot’s blindness and insight in reading Spinoza will indeed illuminate Eliot’s philosophical *ethos* and its limits. Before engaging in a detailed analysis of the “great difficulty”, however, let us first look at several exemplary writings of his “academic philosophizing”, so as to picture the scope of Eliot’s philosophical viewpoints, within which his mis/reading of Spinoza shall fall.

*“il est plus ou moins gâté”*

First of all, let us translate into English the above-quoted comment Eliot has scribbled in French on a blank page of his copy of Spinoza’s *Opera*:

The great difficulty of Spinoza: how an idea outside of God can be adequate. The great difficulty is that the mode isn’t the same in the being as it is in God; it is more or less spoiled. The true difficulty (of Spinoza) is to explain how every existence doesn’t coincide with its essence.<sup>131</sup> Spinoza hasn’t explicated how there exists anything other than the eternal – that’s the great difficulty.

Apparently, Eliot has found difficulties in four points: [1] Immanence of Being (Why is there no outside-of-God?); [2] Spoiled identities of particular beings (Why can’t a particular being, as individual, exist in itself but in “something else [quod in alio est]” (*E* 1def5), i.e., in God?); [3] Non-coincidence between existence and essence in particular beings (Why doesn’t the essence of an individual existence belong to itself but to God?); [4] Eternity of Being (Why is there nothing that is not eternal?). When you look at these four points more carefully, however, you will find that they are all one: Eliot has found “the great difficulty” with comprehending Spinozian ontology – the way Spinoza’s system of Substance (God or Nature) and Modes (particular beings) works. In other words, Eliot has found it at least unexplained, if not necessarily unacceptable, that in that system a particular being (as a mode, or mere modification,<sup>132</sup> of Substance), while being guaranteed, through

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<sup>131</sup> Due to the ambivalence of the original French sentence, it can also be translated as “no existence coincides with its essence”, which is perhaps less ambivalent on the condition that “existence” here denotes only the modal existence (particular things), not the substantial (God or Nature).

<sup>132</sup> See *E* 1p25c: “Particular things [*res particulares*] are nothing else than modifications [*affectiones*] of attributes of God, or modes by which attributes of God are expressed in a certain and determinate manner”. Cf. “God (*Deus*) I understand to be a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of infinite attribute, each of which express eternal and infinite essence” (*E* 1def6); “By Mode (*modus*) I understand the Modifications (*affectiones*) of a substance or that which is in something else through which it may be conceived” (*E* 1def5).

its essence (i.e., Attribute), immanence [1] and eternity [4], has to abandon the coincidence between its durational existence and eternal essence [3], hence forsaking its distinct identity-in-itself [2]. Such is not really an original or atypical criticism against Spinoza's system – ever since its earliest reception – but one feature noticeable here is that Eliot seems particularly concerned with the status of particular beings as individual and independent, rather than with that of God or Nature.

It must be noted here that Eliot's "difficulties" are along the same lines as Joachim's critique, in his *Study of the Ethics of Spinoza* (1901), of what he calls "the central difficulties of Spinoza's system" (75), that is, "the double conception of particular things and of their dependence on God" (76). The comparison is pertinent here, in that Eliot, as we will see in the next chapter, no doubt kept by his side this *explication de texte* by Joachim while studying Spinoza's *Opera*. Read, for instance, the following passages from Joachim's book:

But the particularity of the particular things, when they are so regarded, seems to vanish in the system. Completely real and eternal they may be, but individually distinct they are not. In the timeless actuality of the modal system, in the completeness of 'natura naturata,' there is no individual 'essentia' or 'existentia' except that of the whole system. . . . Individuality of essence and existence belongs in any real sense to God, and to God alone. (78)

As members of 'natura naturata,' the particular things exhibit a complete and timeless 'essentia,' which is mediated by mediate and immediate eternal and infinite modes. How they can yet maintain their individuality in that system is a question which forces itself upon us already, and which will recur with increased difficulties when we come to consider Spinoza's ethical doctrine. (81)

The similarities are more than obvious here – "How they can yet maintain their individuality" is indeed the crucial question, or "the great difficulty", for Eliot as well. Joachim as an acute metaphysician goes even further to question the very status of

Spinoza's system as a "system"<sup>133</sup>:

'Natura naturata' is not a system. For the modes are nothing but states of Substance; and Substance is not differentiated – still less divided – in them. A 'system' seems to postulate some sort of independence in its members, but here all independence vanishes when the modes are conceived 'as they really are' in the Attributes of God, i.e. 'natura naturata.' 'As they really are' they merge themselves in the undifferentiated unity of Substance, and we are left with no rational answer to the question 'How – on what principle – can Substance, in spite of its unity, reveal itself in an order of diverse states?' We are told simply that Substance 'is modified,' or that the modes are 'in' God. But it is precisely this 'having states' or 'being modified' that is so inexplicable, this being of a multiplicity 'in' an absolute unity which requires explanation. (107-8)

The problem here is the "inexplicable" nature of Spinoza's "system", which lacks any "rational answer" or "explanation" to the question of "a multiplicity 'in' an absolute unity".<sup>134</sup> In fact, it seems that, for Joachim, Spinoza's failure in metaphysical "explanation" of the physical world *is* the most problematic of all the "difficulties":

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<sup>133</sup> Joachim no doubt has in mind his Master's famous definition as to the "general nature of reality": "Our result so far is this. Everything phenomenal is somehow real; and the absolute must at least be as rich as the relative. And, further, the Absolute is not many; there are no independent reals. The universe is one in this sense that its differences exist harmoniously within one whole, beyond which there is nothing. Hence the Absolute is, so far, an individual and a system, but, if we stop here, it remains but formal and abstract. Can we then, the question is, say anything about the concrete nature of the system?" (Bradley *Appearance* 127).

<sup>134</sup> It may, in passing, be worth pointing out that the volcanic revival of "New Spinoza" in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, exemplified by such thinkers as Gilles Deleuze and Antonio Negri, is not so much focused on (metaphysical) "explanation" as on (ontological) "expression". See, for instance, the following recollection by Negri: "Thus Spinoza, by way [of] Deleuze's and Matheron's new readings, proposed a new ontology. These readings reconstructed an ontology that attributed to Spinoza, philosopher of the modern, the surpassing – within the limits of the metaphysical sequence of modernity – of all the essential characteristics that distinguished the modern: an ontology of immanence that destroyed even the faintest shadow of transcendentalism, an ontology of experience that refused every phenomenalism, an ontology of the multitude that undermined the immemorial theory of forms of government that was rooted in the sacredness of an *arché* (principle and command), a genealogical ontology that related the ethical and cognitive responsibility for the world to human doing [*fare*]" (*Subversive* 115).

Spinoza “describes the fact in terms of his general theory, but his description is no explanation; and *if taken as an explanation* it conflicts with his statement of the general nature of God” (112).

The fact that Eliot, in the above-quoted comment on a blank page, also stresses the problem of “explanation” (“La vraie difficulté (de Sp.) c’est se représenter. . .”; “Sp. n’a pas expliqué. . .”) seems to suggest that Eliot may have simply copied (or translated) what he had learnt from Joachim’s book. But a closer look will reveal a slight but significant difference – difference as to what it is to be explained, i.e., the *object* of “explanation”. Roughly speaking, what Eliot thinks requires “explanation” is Modes (or particular beings), while what matters for Joachim is Substance (or the coherent Whole). Indeed, such a difference concerning their objects may reflect the difference of the very objectives of their philosophizing. Joachim, a prominent champion of the Bradleyan “Absolute Idealism”, is clear on this point:

It is the object of philosophy to interpret experience so as to render it intelligible. A philosophy is successful so far as it enables us to ‘think’ experience, i.e. to take it in as a coherent system, as a whole which is interconnected by an immanent necessity. This – I have assumed – was the object of Spinoza, and it is from this point of view that I propose to examine the results we have reached. (99)

Now, at first sight, Spinoza’s doctrine seems to fulfil the task of philosophy in an eminent degree . . . To ‘think’ the universe in the spirit of Spinoza, is (it would seem) to grasp its multiplicity in so coherent and transparent an apprehension that the multiplicity transmutes itself in the process into absolute unity: unity so absolute, that ‘unity’ and ‘wholeness’ are terms inadequate to express it.<sup>135</sup>

(101-2)

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<sup>135</sup> It is here that Joachim cites the already-quoted paragraph (See Chapter One) from Bradley’s *Appearance and Reality* “which seems to [him] to express the essence of Spinoza’s doctrine” (102; fn. 1). It should also be noted that the verb “transmute” is frequently used in a significant way by Bradley as well as Eliot.

Joachim's "Absolute Idealism" is authentically idealistic, in that it privileges intellect ("think") over experience or the universe, as well as absolutistic, in that its goal is to achieve "absolute unity" of an intelligible "coherent system". True to his master's "absolute criterion",<sup>136</sup> what matters most for Joachim is "coherence" of a philosophical system without any internal contradiction, so that the "difficulties and criticisms" Joachim finds in Spinoza's doctrine come down to one fundamental problem: "to a closer inspection, the apparent coherency of the Spinozistic Reality seems to vanish", because "[e]lements show themselves as not intelligibly connected – confront us as mere data, which (not only *are not* mediated, but) refusing to enter into the general harmony of the doctrine, stand out as features which can be shown to be discordant with Spinoza's conception of the general nature of Reality" (102). In short, unmediated individuality of particular "elements" is nothing but a burden on the "system" that disturbs "the general harmony" and spoils the "absolute unity" of Reality, e.g., Spinoza's "Substance" or Bradley's "Absolute".

For Eliot, on the other hand, what is spoiled in Spinoza's doctrine is not the "absolute unity" of Substance but the very individuality or identity of each Mode (*La grosse difficulté c'est que le mode n'est pas le même dans l'être qu'il est dans dieu; il est plus ou moins gâté*). In fact, as the marginalia in his copy of Spinoza's *Opera* amply show, Eliot is not much concerned with Spinoza's descriptions of God but is instead quite sceptical, even dismissive, of its all-inclusive, eternal, absolute nature. It is in this similar vein that his dissertation on Bradley begins with a disclaimer: "the ultimate nature of the Absolute does not come within the scope of the present paper" (KE 31). In short, where Joachim's "Absolute Idealism" finds a burden to jettison in order to arrive at an even more coherent "Absolute" by taking "a devious and essentially negative or critical route",<sup>137</sup> Eliot's

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<sup>136</sup> "Ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself; here is an absolute criterion." (Bradley *Appearance* 120)

<sup>137</sup> "Bradley's Monism should, however, be distinguished from other versions – for instance, that of Parmenides or of Spinoza – in that Bradley does not put it forward as a simple general truth supported by two or three overwhelming *a priori* arguments: he comes to it, as I have already suggested, by a devious and essentially negative or critical route." (Wollheim *Bradley* 46)

“relative materialism” (the standpoint he ascribed to himself in the above-quoted letter to Norbert Wiener) sees the “damage” (*gâté*) on individual beings caused by their status as being-in-the-Absolute rather than being-in-themselves – the damage to be redressed by bracketing the idealistic Absolute (Substance: God or Nature).<sup>138</sup>

It is here of great interest to quote Deleuze’s letter to the English translator of his *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*:

What interested me most in Spinoza wasn’t his Substance, but the composition of finite modes. I consider this one of the most original aspects of my book. That is: the hope of making substance turn on finite modes, or at least of seeing in substance a *plane of immanence* in which finite modes operate, already appears in this book. What I needed was both (1) the expressive character of particular individuals, and (2) an immanence of being.

(qt. “Translator’s Preface” to *Expressionism* 11)

One must not, of course, jump to so facetious a conclusion as to identify Eliot’s reading of Spinoza as proto-Deleuzian. Eliot’s “relative materialism” is as far from what Michael Hardt calls Deleuzo-Spinozian “ontological materialism” as Joachim’s “Absolute Idealism” is.<sup>139</sup> It may be true that Eliot, like Deleuze, resists “the threat of an idealist or subjectivist tendency in Spinoza’s thought” (Hardt *Apprenticeship* 74), but Eliot does so simply by bracketing Substance and positing the independence (identity) of particular individuals without asking the question of their “composition” (production); whereas, for Deleuze,

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<sup>138</sup> Cf. Curley, in his celebrated interpretation of Spinoza’s metaphysics, distinguishes the “Boyle-Joachim Interpretation” and the “Wolf Interpretation”, and questions Joachim’s “denial of real individuality to particular things”: “Only the whole of nature is truly an individual. The individuality of finite ‘things’ is an illusion of the finite intellect – an illusion which is very difficult to understand because this finite intellect is itself supposed to be an illusion” (*Metaphysics* 22, 24).

<sup>139</sup> In some sense, it may even be said that Joachim’s understanding of “the Attributes as ‘lines of force,’ or forms in which God’s omnipotence manifests its free causality to an intelligence” (65) is much closer to Deleuze’s significant emphasis on God’s “power” (*potentia*), than Eliot’s negative view of the infinitely powerful God. See also Viljanen “Ontology”, esp. 77.

what is at issue is how Substance *produces* finite modes by “expressing” Itself in Itself<sup>140</sup> – how the Virtual is *actualized* by *differentiating* Itself in Itself.<sup>141</sup> Hence, for Deleuze’s reading of Spinozian ontology, *both* “the expressive character of particular individuals” [expressivity of Attributes<sup>142</sup>] *and* “an immanence of [B]eing” [univocity of Attributes] are necessary, so that – unlike Eliot, who only sees privation of identity in the immanent causality of Modes in virtue of expressive Attributes – Deleuze can positively remark: “Reducing things to modes of a single substance is not a way of making them mere appearances, phantoms, as Leibniz believed or pretended to believe, but is rather the only way, according to Spinoza, to make them ‘natural’ beings, endowed with force or power” (*Expressionism* 92).

In short, where Deleuze sees Difference, Eliot sees Identity and its privation – where

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<sup>140</sup> Note that the “two levels of expression” are compressed into one sentence. According to Deleuze, the Spinozian “expression” has two levels: the first (qualitative self-expression) is the constitution of the essence of substance (*natura naturans*) and the second (quantitative re-expression) is the production of particular things (*natura naturata*): “Thus the substance they designate is expressed in the attributes, attributes express an essence. Then the attributes are in their turn expressed: they express themselves in modes which designate them, the modes expressing a modification. Modes are truly ‘participial’ propositions which derive from the primary infinitive ones. Thus expression, through its own movement, generates a second level of expression. Expression has within it the sufficient reason of a re-expression. This second level defines production itself: God is said to produce things, as his attributes find expression.” (*Expressionism* 105)

<sup>141</sup> Cf. “Why is differentiation an ‘actualization’? Because it presupposes a unity, a virtual primordial totality that is dissociated according to the lines of differentiation, but still shows its subsisting unity and totality in each line. . . . It is difference that is primary in the process of actualization – the difference between the virtual from which we begin and the actuals at which we arrive, and also the difference between the complementary lines according to which actualization takes place. In short, the characteristic of virtuality is to exist in such a way that it is actualized by being differentiated and is forced to differentiate itself, to create its lines of differentiation in order to be actualized.” (Deleuze *Bergsonism* 95, 97). Here, Deleuze primarily discusses Bergson’s *Creative Evolution*, but it is not hard to detect in this description the Spinozian triad: Substance (“the virtual” or “a virtual primordial totality”) – Modes (“the actuals”) – Attributes (“lines of differentiation”).

<sup>142</sup> Cf. “The univocity of attributes merges with their expressivity: attributes are, indissolubly, expressive and univocal. . . . Attributes are formally affirmed of substance; they are formally predicated of the substance whose essence they constitute, and of the modes whose essences they contain. Spinoza constantly reminds us of the affirmative character of the attributes that define substance, and of the need for any good definition to be itself affirmative. Attributes are affirmations; but affirmation, in its essence, is always formal, actual, univocal: therein lies its expressivity.” (*Expressionism* 59, 60)



Deleuze sees Pure Immanence, Eliot desires to find something outside. It is in this context that the apparently self-mocking aside Eliot made in his letter to Wiener ought to be taken at face value: “I am quite ready to admit that the lesson of relativism is: to avoid philosophy and devote oneself to either *real* art or *real* science. (For philosophy is an unloved guest in either company)” (LI 88). Although Eliot’s “relative materialism” provides him with a certain insight into “the threat of an idealist or subjectivist tendency” in metaphysical understanding of the Substance-Modes couple, he is none the less blind to the ontological significance of Attributes in Spinozian “expression” and/or “immanence”, so that Eliot cannot help desiring something “real” by appealing to that which is outside of philosophy, such as art and science – such blindness lies at the heart of Eliot’s mis/reading of Spinoza, which we shall now discuss by closely looking at his annotations and underlines in his copy of Spinoza’s *Opera*.

***“toute existence ne coïncide pas avec son essence”***

So far, we have discussed the second point, or phase, of “*la grosse difficulté*”, i.e., the alleged “damage” (*gâté*) inflicted on individuality / independence of each particular being as is conceived as a mode, or modification, of the infinite, unique, indivisible Substance. It is then safe to say that the third proposition (“*La vraie difficulté (de Sp.) c’est se représenter comment toute existence ne coïncide pas avec son essence.*”) is a sort of elaboration on the same point (the problem of being-in-something-else [quod in alio est]) in slightly more sophisticated, or “philosophical”, terms. The most direct reference Eliot had in mind should be Proposition 24 of Book I:

*E* 1p24. The essence of things [*rerum*] produced by God does not involve existence

*E* 1p24d. This is clear from Def. 1. For that whose nature (considered in itself) involves existence is its own cause [*causa est sui*], and exists merely by the necessity of its own nature. (Vloten 57 / Boyle 21)

Apparently, this is *not* “clear” for Eliot. The reference here is Definition 1, the very first sentence of the whole book, which reads:

*E* 1def1. I understand that to be CAUSE OF ITSELF (*causa sui*) whose essence involves existence and whose nature cannot be conceived unless existing. (Vloten 38 / Boyle 1)

Notice here that, unlike the stereotypical misunderstanding that Spinoza begins with God, the *Ethics*, in fact, begins by defining “*causa sui*” as a certain relation (“*involvere*”<sup>143</sup>) between essence and existence. Substance is then defined as “*causa sui*”, proved to be singular, and finally identified as God, whose “existence and essence are one and the same thing [*unum et idem*]” (*E* 1p20). And, since such identity of existence and essence is vouchsafed only for Substance, not for Modes, and there is nothing that is neither Substance nor Mode (*E* 1a1), it entails that, in particular things [“*res particulares*”<sup>144</sup>], existence doesn’t coincide with essence.

It is a common understanding, from Avicenna and the Scholastics down to Descartes’ Fifth Meditation,<sup>145</sup> that with God – and God alone – essence and existence are one and the

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<sup>143</sup> According to Deleuze, the pair of “*involvere*” (or “*implicare*”) and “*explicare*”, form “the correlates that accompany and further specify the idea of expression”: “To explicate is to evolve, to involve is to implicate. Yet the two terms are not opposites: they simply mark two aspects of expression. Expression is on the one hand and explication, an unfolding of what expresses itself, the One manifesting itself in the Many (substance manifesting itself in its attributes, and these attributes manifesting themselves in their modes). Its multiple expression, on the other hand, involves Unity. The One remains involved in what expresses it, imprinted in what unfolds it, immanent in whatever manifests it: expression is in this respect an involvement.” (*Expressionism* 15-6)

<sup>144</sup> “Particular things are nothing else than modifications [*affectiones*] of attributes of God, or modes by which attributes of God are expressed in a certain and determinate manner” (*E* 1p25c).

<sup>145</sup> See Étienne Gilson, *L’être et l’essence*, Chapters 4 & 5.

same, i.e., that with a finite creature – any finite creature – essence and existence are distinct. Since Eliot no doubt knew this Scholastic tradition and so it shouldn't have been difficult for him to understand the logic summarily described above, it is possible to surmise that Eliot would rather *refuse to* accept its consequence than following the logic so as to find a solution to the difficulty. One celebrated solution is, of course, Thomas Aquinas' concept of "analogy". In this regard, it should be interesting, indeed pertinent, to quote the following passage from Jacques Maritain's *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, not only because Maritain was to become the single most important formative influence on Eliot's later development, but also because it may even be possible for Eliot to have read this book, while working on Spinoza<sup>146</sup>:

In fact, being which is being according to its whole self and in which essence and existence are one, cannot have any cause. On the other hand, being which is participated and in which essence and existence are distinct, absolutely needs to have a cause [Maritain here refers in the footnote to *Summa Theologica*, Ia, q.44, a.1, ad 1.]; and this cause, far from being posited "at the bottom of everything" like a principle in logic, exists necessarily above everything like a boundless plenitude of perfect life whose being transcends infinitely the being of things and is designated by the same word *being* only in virtue of an *analogy*. If from the outset there is confusion between God's Being, whose richness transcends all thought, and the being common to all things, which is the most general and consequently the poorest of entities, we have an *a priori* positing of pantheism. One is then obliged to choose between Spinozism and Bergsonism. (87)

Does Eliot confuse "God's Being" and "the being common to all things", to fall into "an *a priori* positing of pantheism"? Probably not. It seems to be the case that he simply

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<sup>146</sup> The original version in book form, *La Philosophie Bergsonienne*, was published in 1914 (the identical passage is found in p.362), but the particular part that contains the quoted passage had already been published as an article for the *Revue de Philosophie* in Sept.-Oct. 1911, which date coincides with Eliot's return from Paris and composition of the Bergson paper, so it is not so unlikely that Eliot had actually read the passage in or before working on Spinoza.

brackets the former, being concerned only with the latter from the “relative materialist” point of view. Eliot’s mis/reading of Spinoza is not so much akin to what Maritain ascribes to Spinozism and Bergsonism, as to what Spinoza ascribes to those who “are considering only the essence of Modes, and not the whole order of Nature” in his letter to Ludovicus Meyer (Letter XII, commonly known as “On the Nature of the Infinite”), dated April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1663:

I call the states of substance Modes, whose definition, in so far as it is not the definition of Substance, cannot involve existence. Therefore, although they exist, we can conceive them as non-existent, from which it also follows that when we are considering only the essence of Modes, and not the whole order of Nature, we cannot from the fact that they now exist deduce that they will exist or not exist in the future, or that they existed or did not exist in the past. Hence it is clear that we conceive the existence of Substance as entirely different from the existence of Modes. Hence arises the difference between Eternity and Duration: for by means of Duration we can only explain the existence of Modes, but we can only explain the existence of Substance by means of Eternity, that is, the infinite enjoyment of existence or (in awkward Latin) *essendi*. (*Correspondence* 117)

In other words, Eliot does not seem to share the Scholastic *problematic* concerning the relationship between Being and being, so, in effect, he does not find a place for Thomistic “analogy” (hence, not even a version of Spinozism or Bergsonism in Maritain’s sense – without God or *durée*), nor does he feel it necessary to overcome it by appealing to Duns Scotus’ “univocity” (hence, no Spinozist or Bergsonian in Deleuze’s sense), but instead, I would argue, he simply finds it troublesome to accept the consequence of Spinoza’s logic: The problem of God’s Being aside, Eliot finds it disturbing, just as he finds it “damaging”, that a Mode is not in itself but in God, so that, if existence doesn’t coincide with essence in a Mode (i.e., a particular being), a Mode *cannot* sustain its existence by its essence alone, or, to put it more bluntly, a Mode *can* be non-existent (i.e., there can be non-existent Modes).

With this hypothesis in mind, we are now turning to the detailed analysis of Eliot's marginalia in Part I of the *Ethics*.

A first overview of Eliot's annotations and underlines in Part I will surely give you a queer impression that Eliot seems to care less about God, despite the fact that the title of this part is "De Deo", or "Concerning God". In fact, his first annotation is to Definition 7, skipping all the fundamental, categorical definitions of *causa sui* (1), Substance (2, 3), Attribute (4), Mode (5), and God (6):

*E* 1def7. That thing is said to be FREE (*libera*) which exists by the mere necessity of its own nature and is determined in its actions by itself alone. That thing is said to be NECESSARY (*necessaria*), or rather COMPELLED (*coacta*), when it is determined in its existence and actions by something else in a certain fixed ratio.

(Vloten 37 / Boyle 2)

[Eliot's note:] Agrees / with Descartes / conception of liberty.

Several pages earlier, in *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* (paragraph 108; Vloten 33), Eliot has already mentioned "See / Descartes / Passions", so Eliot's reference to Descartes here should be *Les Passions de l'Ame* (1649), more specifically the articles 144-146, in which the relation of free will (*libre arbitre*) with Divine Providence is considered.<sup>147</sup> It is highly symbolic that the first annotation to the *Ethics* by Eliot is *misrepresentation* of Spinoza's ontological conception of freedom by Descartes' "free will". We should not dwell any further on Spinoza's anti-Cartesianism, but here it probably suffices to quote from Deleuze: "The whole effort of the *Ethics* is aimed at breaking the traditional link between freedom and will" (*Practical* 69). In short, Eliot has, already at the very

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<sup>147</sup> See also the Fourth *Meditation* and *Principia Philosophia*, I-41.

beginning, displaced (or misplaced) the *ontological* question of freedom and necessity – of what Spinoza calls, in the above-quoted letter, “the whole order of Nature” – by the *psychological* question of free will.<sup>148</sup>

Eliot then moves on to Propositions, skipping the first six that establish that Substance is one and cannot be produced by another, and gives his next annotation to Proposition 7, highlighting its Demonstration:

*E* 1p7. Existence appertains to the nature of substance.

*E* 1p7d. A substance cannot be produced from anything else (prev. Prop., Coroll.): it will therefore be its own cause [causa sui], that is (Def. 1), its essence necessarily involves existence, or existence appertains to the nature of it. *Q.e.d.*

(Vloten 40 / Boyle 4; Eliot’s vertical bar)

[Eliot’s note:] If it cannot / be produced from / anything else / it cannot be / imaginary / (idea ficta)

The term “idea ficta” appears in *TdIE* as the first of the three types of pseudo-cognizance (*idea ficta* or *fictio*; *idea falsa* or *falsitas*; *idea dubia* or *dubitatio*), to which Joachim gives the English words, “Supposal”, “Error”, and “Doubt”, respectively (*Tractatus* 112-197). It is not certain whether Eliot means to refer to *TdIE* by adding the Latin term here, but what is symptomatic here is again that Eliot deliberately displaces the *ontological* question of “causa sui” by the *epistemological* question of “idea ficta”. According to Viljanen’s exposition of “Spinoza’s Ontology”, Proposition 7 “makes the crucial existential claim

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<sup>148</sup> Interestingly, Eliot returns to this dictum in one of his most famous essays, “The Perfect Critic”: “When we understand necessity, as Spinoza knew, we are free because we assent” (SW 11). This is a rather irrelevant reference in the context of that essay – in that sense, perhaps, another instance of what I have called “sporadic, almost *rhizomic*” intrusions of Spinoza into Eliot’s texts – but it is interesting to note that Eliot still regards the *subject* of freedom as “we”, much along the lines of Descartes.

concerning the substances and can serve as a vantage point from which to examine the way in which Spinoza moves from purely conceptual considerations to existential ones” (71) – the necessary existence of Substance(s), entailed by its essence involving existence, i.e., being *causa sui*. Eliot, on the other hand, does not seem to care about the ontological significance of this proposition at all, but instead sees a theory of knowledge – or, at best, what I have discussed as the “epistemologico-critical” moment.

Such an impression is strengthened by Eliot’s rather misplaced annotation to the immediately following proposition that establishes necessity and infinity of Substance’s existence, hence there is but one Substance:

*E 1p8.* All substance is necessarily infinite.

*E 1p8d.* No two or more substances can have the same attribute (Prop. 5), and it appertains to the nature of substance that it should exist (Prop. 7). It must therefore exist either finitely or infinitely. But not finitely. For (Def. 2) it would then be limited by some other substance of the same nature which also of necessity must exist (Prop. 7): and then two substances would be granted having the same attribute, which is absurd (Prop. 5). It will exist, therefore, infinitely. *Q.e.d.*

(Vloten 40 / Boyle 4)

[Eliot’s note:] If limited by / another substance / of the same na- / ture, it would / coincide with that subs. + / therefore not be / limited; and / it cannot be / limited by a / subs. of a dift. / nature. But it / cannot be limited / by a substance having / nothing in common with it. / Mind cannot, from the point of / view of mind, be limited by body

In fact, this annotation is not just misplaced, but it is simply a gross misunderstanding of Eliot to bring up Mind and Body as if they were two distinct Substances of different nature, rather than two Modes of one infinite Substance under two of its infinite Attributes. Such misunderstanding, however, is perhaps understandable. In fact, Pierre Bayle’s article on

Spinoza in his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1697), one of the earliest and perhaps the most famous denunciations of Spinozism, identifies Modes with “created substances” (*à la* Descartes),<sup>149</sup> while, even earlier, one of the very first sympathetic readers of the (ur-)*Ethics*, Simon de Vries, who was a wealthy merchant and one of the leaders of the Spinoza reading group in Amsterdam,<sup>150</sup> expresses doubts of a similar sort in his letter to the author himself (Letter 8; Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>, 1663):

Thus you, Sir, seem to suppose that the nature of a substance is so constituted that it can have many attributes, which you have not yet proved, unless you refer to the fifth definition [*E 1def6* in the published version] of the absolute infinite substance, or God; otherwise, if I may say that each substance has only one attribute and if I had the idea of two attributes, then I could rightly conclude that where there are two different attributes there are also two different substances. We entreat you to give a clearer explanation also with reference to this. (*Correspondence* 104)

Spinoza’s response in Letter 9 is, according to Alan Donagan, “perplexing”, as it only begs the question and does not answer the difficulties here involved (“Substance” 14; See also his *Spinoza*, Ch. 5). Joachim, on the other hand, gathers that such misunderstanding was caused by Spinoza’s own confusing identification, *à la* Descartes, of Substance and Attribute in an earlier draft, so “[i]t was only to avoid misunderstanding that he adopted the stricter terminology of the *Ethics*, according to which ‘God’ is the ‘*Substantia constans infinitis attributis*’” (Joachim *Ethics* 20). Joachim, however, does not mean to simply denounce the ambiguity of Spinoza’s earlier terminology, but sees in such a “change of terminology” “a real change in point of view – an advance on Descartes”:

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<sup>149</sup> See Brykman “Bayle’s” 263-7. See also Descartes’ *Principles*, LI – LIV.

<sup>150</sup> This heterogeneous group of various professionals represents what Negri calls “the Dutch anomaly”: “Science, technology, the market, politics: We should not understand their nexus and their articulation as an unstable mixture that the science of Power (*potestas*) is in the process of splitting apart (as would come to pass in the other European countries). Rather, they should be understood as direct agents of different facets of a conception of life, of its force, of its power (*potentia*) that is not yet corrupt. They should be understood as productive activity, as labor” (*Savage* 10).



Spinoza, on the contrary, never for one moment allows himself to regard the particular bodies and minds as Substances: and from the first grasps firmly the dependent nature of all being – even the extended and thinking worlds as wholes – on the one self-dependent being. Everything except the one Substance is for him adjectival in its nature. . . . In framing the stricter terminology of the *Ethics*, Spinoza gets rid, once and for all, of a twofold misinterpretation. His students can no longer suppose *either* that he agrees with Descartes in attributing a quasi-independence to the particular bodies and minds: *or* that he regards the worlds of Extension and Thought as in any sense self-dependent because mutually independent.<sup>151</sup> (20-21)

In short, Eliot, following Descartes “in attributing an quasi-independence to the particular bodies and minds”, is blind to Spinoza’s “advance” on – or *break* with – Descartes, that is to say, Eliot seems to be interested only in the epistemological and psychological aspects of the *Ethics*, so that he is incapable of comprehending the ontological significance of “what [Spinoza] takes over from Descartes in order to turn it against him” (Deleuze *Expressionism* 29). As a result, Eliot passes over Proposition 11 with its three demonstrations and one scholium, which together form the crucially important ontological statement as regards necessary existence of the “absolutely infinite and most perfect” [*absolute infinito et summe perfecto*]<sup>152</sup> Being (*E* 1p11: “God or a substance consisting of

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<sup>151</sup> Schopenhauer also admits Spinoza’s development, “when he stood on his own feet”, from the Cartesian dualism to the Substance monism, but he does not necessarily find in it “a real change in point of view – an advance on Descartes”: “by abolishing the difference between *substantia cogitans* and *substantia extensa*, Spinoza has still not solved this [Cartesian] problem, but has at most again rendered physical influence admissible” (*Parerga* 9).

<sup>152</sup> Cf. “God is not infinite as such (i.e., as a substance), but his attributes are. Spinoza therefore multiplies infinity by declaring God to be absolutely infinite. . . . God, as such, receives the (perhaps derived and inaccurate) title ‘absolutely infinite’ in order to distinguish him from the attribute, which is infinite in the true sense. Conversely, the fact that the idea of perfection does not appear until proposition 11 is not due to its being secondary or derived; it is because the only reason for its appearance at all is to confirm the overtaking of the simple infinity (of the attribute) by the absolute infinity (of a substance with an infinity of infinite attributes).” (Marion “Coherence” 74)

infinite attributes [*Deus, sive substantia constans infinitis attributis*],<sup>153</sup> each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists” (Vloten 43 / Boyle 7)), but instead underlines “res” in Proposition 9 (*E* 1p9: “The more reality or being a thing [*res*] has, the more attributes will it have” (Vloten 42 / Boyle 7)), giving there a rather misleading annotation, “Substance?”, as if Substance were a relative “thing”.<sup>154</sup> Such willful blindness and misplaced insight of Eliot in *E* 1p9 – p11 clearly reveal that, after all these “categorical”<sup>155</sup> propositions (*E* 1p1 – p8), Eliot has not understood at all, or has at best deliberately refused to accept, the crux of Spinoza’s fundamental ontological thesis that there is but one single Substance, absolutely infinite and necessarily existing.

Before we move on, let us tarry a little longer at Proposition 8. Although it is safe to say that Eliot’s invocation of Mind and Body here is nothing but a typical Cartesian misunderstanding, it is still of great interest that Eliot, in this context, introduces “the point of view” out of nowhere, in that it is indeed the central conceptual apparatus Eliot uses for epistemological critique in his doctoral dissertation and academic papers on Bradley. The critical issues involving “the point of view” are to be fully discussed in the following chapter, especially in conjunction with Eliot’s reading of “*idea ideae*” and scientific knowledge in Part II of the *Ethics*, but, meanwhile, let us carefully look at the way in which Eliot reads the two scholia of Proposition 8, as well as the way in which he *doesn’t* read (i.e., *symptomatically* passes over) them. The first scholium, only 3 lines in Vloten, is perhaps of less significance:

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<sup>153</sup> This definition of God is a restatement of *E* 1def6, to which Eliot gives no underline or annotation.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. “[I]t must be pointed out that the word ‘thing’ [in *E* 1p9] also applies to things in general, including modes. Indeed, because we have the idea of God, we also have some intuition of what could be called the ‘ontological density’ of things.” (Matheron “Essence” 27)

<sup>155</sup> “In this context *it appears difficult to consider the first eight propositions as having only a hypothetical sense*. Some proceed as though Spinoza began by arguing on the basis of a hypothesis that he didn’t accept, as if setting out from a hypothesis that he intended to refute. But this misses the categorical sense of the first eight propositions. There are not several substances of the same attribute, and numerical distinction is not real: we are not here confronting a provisional hypothesis, valid up to the point where we discover absolutely infinite substance, but have before us, rather, a development that leads us inevitably to posit such a substance.” (Deleuze *Expressionism* 37)

E 1p8s1. As to call anything finite is, in reality, a denial in part, and to call it infinite is the absolute assertion of the existence of its nature, it follows, therefore (from Prop. 7 alone), that all substance must be infinite. (Vloten 40-41 / Boyle 5; Eliot's underline)

[Eliot's note:] All determina- / tion is negation

This is a textbook-like reference to Hegel's reading, or "*l'exploitation*",<sup>156</sup> of Spinoza, which is itself of no particular significance, except that it shows that Eliot, in reading Spinoza, had in mind not only Descartes but also Hegel, though apparently to a far lesser degree. In any case, the reference here is so casual that it rather seems simply to reveal that Eliot is just as indifferent to the significant ontological statement concerning infinity of Substance as to the problems involved in Hegelian misrepresentation of "*omnis determination est negatio*".

The second scholium is much longer, 72 lines in Vloten, and much more significant, in that it gives an alternative, "positive" demonstration of Proposition 8 by referring to the nature of numerical distinction and external causality, which takes a different course from the one developed through the opening propositions running up to 1p8.<sup>157</sup> Moreover, it is

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<sup>156</sup> "As Hegel said in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Spinoza had a rather grandiose phrase [*omnis determinatio est negatio*] . . . We can even ask ourselves whether this phrase – which he translates as "die Bestimmtheit ist Negation" (*Logic*) or further, "alle Bestimmtheit ist Negation" (*Lectures*) – was not written by Hegel himself, insofar as a statement belongs to the one who makes use of it. In any case, the use [*l'exploitation*] he makes of it has precisely the precondition that he has taken it out of its context and that he takes it absolutely, as an almost magical formula within which the entire framework of Spinozism, with its contradictions, its promises and its failures, can be found as a kind of summary." (Macherey *Hegel* 113)

<sup>157</sup> Cf. "The opening of the *Ethics* is organized around these two Cartesian conclusions. Where lies the error, Spinoza asks, in supposing several substances sharing the same attribute? He refutes the error in two ways, using a favorite style of argument: first through a *reductio ad absurdum*, and the through a more complex proof. If there were several substances with the same attribute, they would have to be distinguished by their modes, which is absurd, since substance is in its very nature anterior to its modes, none of which it implies (this is the short way, taken at 1p5). The positive demonstration comes further on, in a scholium to Proposition 8: two substances with the same attribute would be only *numerically* distinct – and the character of numerical distinction is such as to exclude the possibility of making of it a real or substantial distinction." (Deleuze *Expressionism* 31)

far more revealing as regards the tendency, or *logic*, of Eliot's mis/reading:

*E* 1p8s2. I make no doubt but that to all those who form injudicious opinions of things and are not wont to see things through their first causes, it may be difficult to conceive the proof of the seventh Proposition; doubtless because they do not distinguish between the modifications of substances and the substances themselves, nor know they in what manner things are produced. Hence it comes to pass that they apply the principle which they see in common things to substances. For those who do not know the real causes of things confuse everything, and without the least mental repugnance imagine things to be now trees and now speaking men [Shirley's translation: "they imagine trees as well as men talking" (220)], and think that men are now formed from stones and now grown from seed, believing it easy for one form to be changed into another. Thus those who confuse divine with human nature easily attribute human passions to God, more specially if they do not know how passions are produced in the mind. But . . .  
(Vloten 41 / Boyle 5)

[Eliot's note, next to "tam arbores quam homines loquentes":] V. Em. Int.

"V. Em. Int." is no doubt abbreviation of "Vide *Emendatione Intellectus* [i.e., *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*]", and that which Eliot bears in mind here is most likely the first footnote to Paragraph 57 (or "footnote y") of *TdIE*,<sup>158</sup> which concerns "fiction [*fictio*, or *idea ficta*]" caused by confusion of the mind in recollection, giving an example of "a tree

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<sup>158</sup> "When I speak afterwards of fiction which concerns essences, it will be clearly apparent that fiction never makes anything new, or affords anything to the mind, but that only such things as are in the brain or imagination are recalled to the memory, and that the mind regards them all at the same time confusedly. For example, speech and tree are recalled to the memory, and when the mind confusedly attends to both without distinction, it thinks of a tree speaking [*arborem loqui*]. The same is understood of existence, especially, as we said, when it is conceived generally as a being, for then it is easily applied to all things which occur in the memory at the same time. This is very worthy of notice." (Vloten 17 / Boyle 244)

speaking”. Such association makes sense all the more for Eliot’s earlier reference to “idea ficta”. Here again, Eliot seems far less interested in what is confused (i.e., distinction of the ontological status between Substance and Mode, plus the former’s necessary production of the latter) than how they are confused (i.e., the “epistemologico-critical” aspect). Eliot then skips 18 lines, which include the significant affirmation of non-existent modes as a (onto-)logical consequence of Mode’s *in-alio*-ness (i.e., non-coincidence between essence and existence): “we may have true ideas of modifications which do not exist: since although they do not really exist outside the mind [extra intellectum], yet their essence is comprehended in something else [*in alio*], and through that they may be conceived” (Vloten 41 / Boyle 5). Instead of touching upon such critically important statements, Eliot’s next attention goes again to Spinoza’s mere illustration of a thesis, rather than the thesis itself:

. . . . If anyone should say, then, that he has a clear and distinct, that is a true, idea of substance, and should nevertheless doubt whether such substance existed, he would indeed be like one who should say that he had a true idea and yet should doubt whether it were false (as will be manifest to any one who regards it carefully); or if any one should say that substance was created, he would state at the same time that a false idea might be made true, than which it is difficult to conceive anything more absurd. And therefore it must necessarily be acknowledged that the existence of substance, like its essence, is an eternal truth. . .

(Vloten 41 / Boyle 5-6; Eliot’s underlines)

[Eliot’s note:] i.e. / we cannot / conduct any / investigation / without its / assumption.

The underlined sentence is nothing but an illustration of a fallacious doubt caused by disregard for the crucial ontological statement of Proposition 7 as regards the necessary existence of Substance (“its essence necessarily involves existence”). However, taken out

of context, as Eliot does, the sentence appears to be a mere question-begging. It is then safe to say that Eliot's note, by substituting "its assumption" for "a true idea [*idea vera*]", implies his scepticism of the dogmatic "true idea" of Spinozian ontology, hence underlining "an eternal truth" as a sign of scepticism. Moreover, such substitution of "its assumption" (methodology) for "a true idea" (ontology) can be seen along the same lines with Eliot's deliberate displacement of the *ontological* question of "causa sui" by the *epistemological* question of "idea ficta" in his reading of Proposition 7, discussed above.

It is then no wonder that Eliot skips the following 30 lines that provides the important passage demonstrating "in another manner that there cannot be two substances of the same nature". Eliot's attention only falls on the concluding part:

. . . . Hence (Note 4) the reason why these twenty men exist, and consequently why each of them exists, must necessarily be given outside each one of them: and therefore it may be absolutely concluded that everything whose nature involves the existence of a certain number of individuals must of necessity have, since they exist, an external cause. Now since, as has been shown already in this Note, existence appertains to the nature of substance, its definition must then of necessity involve existence, and therefore from its mere definition its existence can be concluded. But, since, in Notes 2 and 3, we have shown that from its own definition the existence of several substances cannot follow, it follows necessarily therefore that two or more substances cannot have the same nature as was put forward.

(Vloten 42 / Boyle 6-7; Eliot's underlines)

It is again interesting that Eliot's attention is not directed to the final conclusion (i.e., there cannot be two substances), but rather to the contradiction that leads to it (i.e., everything numerical must have an external cause, hence cannot be a substance – that is to say, no mode is in itself (*causa sui*) but in something else). To recapitulate Eliot's reading of

Propositions 7 & 8 that contain the crucial ontological claims with regard to Substance, it seems as if Eliot did deliberately avoid reading all the important passages (“important” from an ontological point of view), displacing and replacing them systematically, or *symptomatically*, by epistemological or methodological questions on one hand and, on the other, directing his attention, away from the “eternal truth” of one single Substance that exists *in se* (i.e., “its essence necessarily involves existence” (1p7d)), to plural Modes that exist *in alio* (i.e., their essence doesn’t involve existence), although the discussion about the numerical aspect of Modes here is, in fact, only meant to work as a contradiction in order to dialectically demonstrate that numerical argument does not pertain to Substance. In short, where the *Ethics*, at this incipient stage, attempts to establish the ontological claim, as “an eternal truth”, that there is one single Substance, absolutely infinite and necessarily existing, Eliot seems to complain about such a dogmatic “assumption” that bars any “investigation” into plural Modes independently of Substance.

***“comment il y a autre chose que l’éternel”***

“*Sp. n’a pas expliqué comment il y a autre chose que l’éternel, c’est la grosse difficulté*” is Eliot’s fourth “difficulty”, which is, in a sense, an *ironical* consequence of the second and the third – “ironical”, in the sense that the alleged “damage” inflicted upon an individual being due to its being-*in-alio* [2], i.e., its essence not involving existence [3], is indeed the very cause for its eternity, for its essence belongs not to its durational existence but to “God or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, [that] necessarily exists” (*E* 1p11).

It is fair to say that the opening ten propositions converge on this Proposition 11, where God appears for the first time in the propositional chain as that which is identical with Substance (“*Deus sive substantia*”), thus confirming Definition 6 (“God I understand

to be a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence”). The *Ethics* does not really begin with God, but with scrupulous establishment of the ontological ground for one single Substance, absolutely infinite and necessarily existing, and only after that, at Proposition 11, God is identified with such a Substance and Proposition 14 adds that God is the *only* Substance (“Except God no substance can be granted or conceived”). This is, as I have briefly mentioned above, the kernel of the Method: “So in the beginning we must take the greatest care that we arrive at knowledge of such a Being [i.e., “the most perfect Being [Entis perfectissimi]”] as quickly as possible” (*TdIE*, Paragraph 49). From this convergent point, the mighty river of the *Ethics* flows in geometric order.

Eliot’s reading of these opening propositions, however, seems deliberately, almost desperately, to ignore this converging movement – no wonder he skips those pivotal propositions – by constantly directing his attention away from the ontological statements with regard to Substance, and instead focalizing, almost farcically, Modes as if they were substances. It seems as though Eliot were determined to assume an anti-Method position without feeling the need to construct any other method – here, and elsewhere, I cannot help sensing a taint of anarchism in early Eliot. In this context, the above-mentioned replacement of “a true idea” by “its assumption” is truly as significant as it is symptomatic. Let me quote again the sentence underlined by Eliot and his annotation to it:

. . . . he would indeed be like one who should say that he had a true idea and yet should doubt whether it were false . . . (*E* 1p8s2)

[Eliot’s note:] i.e. / we cannot / conduct any / investigation / without its / assumption.

In Spinoza, “a true idea” (*idea vera*) is *the* necessary and sufficient condition for the Method. Its replacement by mere (relative) “assumption” that is required for any



(subjective) “investigation” means, at the very least, nullification of the whole Method. This crucial moment of Eliot’s (mis- or anti-)reading of Spinoza brings us back to the *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*, especially the paragraphs 33-36 concerning *idea vera*:

A true idea (for we have a true idea) is something different from its ideal (*ideatum*).<sup>159</sup> For a circle is one thing, and the idea of one another; for the idea of a circle is not something having a circumference and a centre, as is a circle, not is the idea of a body the body itself. And as it is something different from its ideal, it must also be something intelligible in itself, that is, the idea as regards its formal essence can be the object of another objective essence; and again, this second objective essence will also be, when regarded in itself, something real and intelligible, and so on indefinitely. [33] . . . Whence it is also clear that for the certainty of truth no other sign is needed than to have a true idea; for as we have shown, it is not necessary in order to know, to know that I know. From which also it is again clear that no one can know what is the greatest certainty, unless he have an adequate idea or the objective essence of anything, that is, certainty is the same thing as objective essence. [35] As, then, the truth needs no sign, but it suffices to have the objective essences of things, or what is the same thing, ideas, in order to remove all doubt, it follows that the true method is not to seek a sign of the truth after the acquisition of ideas, but the true method is the way in which truth itself, or the objective essences or ideas of things (for truth and the objective essences and ideas have the same signification), must be sought in their proper order. [36]

(*TdIE*, Paragraphs 33-36; Vloten 11-12 / Boyle 236-238; Eliot’s underlines)

It should be by now quite obvious that Eliot is, when he underlines the matter-of-course assertion in parenthesis (*habemus enim veram ideam*), far from agreeing with Spinoza, but betrays instead his scepticism of the dogmatic foundation of the Method. Joachim, in his

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<sup>159</sup> It is slightly misleading to translate “*ideatum*” to “ideal”. Dijn’s “object” is perhaps more appropriate. Joachim, like many others, simply does not translate the term in his expositions.

posthumously published *explication de texte* of *TdIE*, also calls attention to the matter-of-course-ness of this statement,<sup>160</sup> and explicates it, in an authentically idealistic manner, as Spinoza's privileging the intellect:

Notice that Spinoza appeals to the right or logical order as something 'we naturally possess'. It is the intellect's own intrinsic order – logical or intelligible, because intelligent. So we shall find him appealing to the *vis native* of the intellect; and to a 'true idea which we possess', i.e., to knowledge as *in some sense* 'ours' actually, inalienably, and beyond dispute. These appeals are grounded (a) on his conception of the *res cogitans* which must, as such, form true or adequate thoughts, and (b) on his doctrine that our 'intellect' is our mind in so far as the latter is constituted by those true and adequate thoughts alone and 'whole', i.e. unmutilated. (Joachim *Tractatus* 25; fn. 1)

There is another, very different, reader of Spinoza who reads "the absolute radicalism of objective being" into the same passage:

[Following the quotation of Paragraphs 31-32 of *TdIE*] What else is there to say? That the ontological statute of Spinozian utopia is shown here at the height of its power? There is no need, because we can see this merely by looking at the subsequent paragraphs where the cognitive realism is freed from every perceptive premise. "Habemus enim ideam veram." But "idea vera est diversum quid a suo ideato." Truth is therefore a sign to itself, but the recomposition of truth and the objective order of the world remain unaccomplished. The true method is that by which we seek the truth; or, rather, the objective order of things; or, rather, the ideas (all three express the same thing) according to the due order ([*TdIE*] 33-36). Thus the objective nexus of truth is freed from every perceptive premise and is subordinated only to the project of constitution: We are faced with the absolute

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<sup>160</sup> "Hence, in the opening sentence of his account of the true *idea* and its *ideatum*, Spinoza asserts – in a parenthesis, and as a matter of course – *habemus enim veram ideam*" (Joachim *Tractatus* 57; fn. 4).

radicalism of objective being. (Negri *Savage* 33)

Eliot would certainly not agree with Joachim's idealist reading that privileges "the intellect's own intrinsic order", so he would not accept knowledge of a true idea "as *in some sense* 'ours' actually, inalienably, and beyond dispute" – hence, he brings up an "assumption" that is relative. Nor would he be able to comprehend Negri's radical materialist reading that finds, in the very same paragraphs, "the objective nexus of truth . . . freed from every perceptive premise", i.e., "the absolute radicalism of objective being" – hence, he refers to an "investigation" that is subjective. Eliot does, as it were, "occupy a middle ground" between the idealist and the materialist readings of the Method – here, it may not be too farfetched to recall Royce's Absolute Idealism and Santayana's Naturalism by way of analogy.

True to his relativist proclivity, Eliot blinds himself to the somewhat tautological (thus foundationless), fundamental (thus foundational) "philosophical intuition" (to use a Bergsonian term), such as we find in the above-quoted paragraphs of *TdIE* – E.g., [Foundation:] "for we have a true idea"; [Tautology:] "for the certainty of truth no other sign is needed than to have a true idea; for as we have shown, it is not necessary in order to know, to know that I know"; [End:] "the true method is the way in which truth itself . . . must be sought in their proper order" (Eliot's underlines). Such self-inflicted blindness, in turn, deprives him of possible insights – whether absolute idealist or radical materialist – into the pivotal Proposition 11, which is the fundamental ontological statement "concerning God" and which, at the same time, could indeed be regarded as tautological (*Deus sive substantia*) unless Spinoza's "philosophical intuition" were to be shared. It is then no surprise that, as if dumbstruck, Eliot's marginalia abruptly disappear (1p10 [Vloten 43] ~ 1p20 [Vloten 55]), only leaving constant but nonchalant underlines and highlights (it is only Proposition 16 that does not receive any), until finally he writes only one word, "difficult", in the margin next to Proposition 21:

*E 1p21.* All things which follow from the absolute nature of any attribute of God must exist for ever and infinitely, or must exist eternally and infinitely through that same attribute. (Vloten 55 / Boyle 19)

[Eliot's note:] difficult

With this note, Eliot stops even dropping occasional underlines and highlights, leaving four pages totally blank, until Proposition 29, which is indeed a glaring absence of Eliot's hand, since scarcely a page has been so completely untouched up to this point. This fact apparently suggests that his desperate cry ("difficult") extends all through these important propositions. So let me quote them all at once without their demonstrations, corollaries, and scholia:

*E 1p22.* Whatever follows from an attribute of God, in so far as it is modified by such a modification as exists of necessity and infinitely through the same, must also exist of necessity and infinitely.

*E 1p23.* Every mode which of necessity and infinitely exists must of necessity have followed either from the absolute nature of some attribute of God, or from some attribute modified by a modification which exists of necessity and infinitely.

*E 1p24.* The essence of things produced by God does not involve existence.

*E 1p25.* God is not only the effecting cause [*causa efficiens*] of the existence of things, but also of their essence.

*E 1p26.* A thing which is determined for the performing of anything was so determined necessarily by God, and a thing which is not determined by God cannot determine of itself to do anything.

*E 1p27.* A thing which is determined by God for the performing of anything cannot render itself undermined.

*E 1p28.* Every individual [*singulare*] thing, or whatever thing that is finite and has a determined existence, cannot exist nor be determined for action unless it is determined for action and existence by another cause which

is also finite and has a determined existence; and again, this cause also cannot exist not be determined for action unless it be determined for existence and action by another cause which also is finite and has a determined existence: and so on to infinity.

(Vloten 56-59 / Boyle 20-23)

Propositions 21-23 concern the controversial “infinite modes”, among which, especially, Proposition 21 (“All things . . . must exist eternally and infinitely”) is directly related to Eliot’s fourth “difficulty”: “*Sp. n’a pas expliqué comment il y a autre chose que l’éternel*”. Proposition 24, together with Proposition 25, is that which Eliot paraphrases as his third “difficulty”: “*toute existence ne coïncide pas avec son essence*”. Propositions 26-27 do, by describing the necessary external causality (determination by God) as regards individual modes’ existence and action, add another strong evidence for Eliot’s second “difficulty”: “*il est plus ou moins gâté*”. Since the latter two “difficulties” have already been fully discussed above, let us now focus on the problem of “infinite modes”, where, indeed, Eliot finally stumbled and cried, “difficult”.

It is, according to Yirmiyahu Yovel, “one of the most controversial of Spinoza’s problems, sometimes known as the ‘derivation of the particular’ or the ‘relation of finite to infinite’,” where “Spinoza has been variously charged with, despite himself, being unable to derive the finite particular from God as infinite, and therefore allowing his system to end with a Parmenidean result, the particulars being mere products of the imagination” (“Infinite” 91); It is also, according to Emilia Giancotti, “not only one of the most controversial in Spinozist philosophy but also a kind of intersection of concepts upon whose clarification or interpretation the ultimate meaning of this philosophy depends”, namely, the problem of “the lack of the ‘deduction’ of the finite from the infinite” (“Problem” 97). In a sense, for Eliot, who has bracketed God from the beginning, this cannot pose a “problem”, but is simply “difficult”, or nonsensical. Here, it may be worth recalling, by way of contrast, Deleuze’s letter to the English translator of his *Expressionism*

in *Philosophy*, in which he says, “What interested me most in Spinoza wasn’t his Substance, but the composition of finite modes. I consider this one of the most original aspects of my book” (qt. “Translator’s Preface” to *Expressionism* 11). Both Eliot and Deleuze may be more interested in Modes than in Substance, but, whereas Deleuze, like many other serious readers of Spinoza ever since, problematizes the “composition” (production or “constitution”) of finite Modes by infinite Substance (i.e., “derivation of the particular”), Eliot simply passes over this controversial problem in silence.

What then is the problem for Eliot? It is certainly not the problem of derivation of the finite particular from the infinite God, since Eliot “ignores *consciously*” God or Substance, absolutely infinite and necessarily existing. The problem for Eliot is, rather, the alleged eternity of *all* things – in other words, why Spinoza cannot observe, as Eliot does, anything *sub specie durationis* (i.e., through its existence), rather than *sub specie aeternitatis* (i.e., through its essence). What then is Eliot’s problem? It is, I would argue, that Eliot’s viewpoint is restricted to the *horizontal* dimension, lacking the *vertical* line. Here I am referring to Yovel’s discussion on the logic of complementary systems, *vertical* and *horizontal*, which “Spinoza evidently sees . . . as expressing the same process – that of cosmic particularization”:

Given a particular thing, there are two ways Spinoza accounts for it. According to *E* 1p28, a thing is produced by other finite things in an endless chain of external causation. This is the “horizontal” line, expressing the universe from the viewpoint of mechanism and finitude. However far we may regress or progress in the line of causes, we shall always remain in the realm of finite modes and external determination. On the other hand, according to *E* 1p16 (and its extensions in 1p18 through 1p25), particular things are derived from God as their immanent cause, following a *logical* principle of particularization. This is the “vertical” line of causation. It goes from the substance through an attribute to a series of infinite modes (direct and mediated), until it is said to reach and determine the particular individual. (*Heretic I* 157-8)

Proposition 28, quoted above, is that up to which Eliot's "difficult" extends, while Proposition 16 ("Infinite things in infinite modes (that is, all things which can fall under the heading of infinite intellect) must necessarily follow from the necessity of divine nature") is, symptomatically enough, the only proposition Eliot has not touched at all between 1p13 and 1p21.<sup>161</sup> Let us not dwell much further on the problem of Infinite Mode itself,<sup>162</sup> but instead focus on what Eliot misses here by being blind to, or not problematizing, this problem – in other words, by bracketing the *vertical* line of causation (i.e., finite Modes' "ontological dependence"<sup>163</sup> on God or Substance, hence their eternity, through their essences) while being concerned exclusively with the *horizontal* (i.e., physical and psychological) dimension of particular existences.

At the beginning of this section, I have remarked that the "difficulty" Eliot finds with *all* things being eternal is, in a sense, an "ironical" consequence of the alleged "damage" inflicted upon every individual Mode (or *res particulares*), due to its existence not involving essence. But, perhaps, such (d)evaluation of Eliot's "difficulties" has been made rather high-handedly from a Neo-Spinozist point of view – from a premise that Eliot was not capable of comprehending the ontological significance of Spinoza's Eternity. Taken out of context, however, Eliot's comment, "Spinoza hasn't explicated how there exists anything other than the eternal – that's the great difficulty", seems to be a simple

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<sup>161</sup> Already before the publication of the *Ethics*, one of the earliest readers of its draft, Tschirnhaus, had touched upon this problem, calling Proposition 16 "almost the most important one in Book I of your Treatise" in his letter to Spinoza dated June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1676 (*Correspondence* 364).

<sup>162</sup> For a recent, comprehensive account of this problem, see Giancotti, "On the Problem of Infinite Modes". Incidentally, Giancotti talks of "the difficulties [Spinoza's] readers would have when attempting to follow him from *E* 1p21 . . . to *E* 1p28" (104), which precisely coincides with the blank pages Eliot has left.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. ". . . finite modes in Spinoza are as eternal as the substance from which they derive. The vertical line of causality should be understood not as a process of 'creation' or 'emanation' but as ontological dependence or support. Seen *sub specie aeternitatis* (through their essences), finite things are just as eternal and primordial as their sustaining substance. The difference is that the essence of finite things does not imply existence but requires the essence of the substance in order to exist. Yet this dependence is eternal; it is a logical, timeless relation by which the modes, seen as particular essences, presuppose God. They inhere in God as their ontological support and are implications of God's essence, but they are there eternally like God himself" (Yovel *Heretics I* 160).

common-sense reaction: Eliot does not question the logic, or *idea vera*, of Eternity in every Mode, but simply and commonsensically complains that Spinoza “hasn’t explicated” the actual, physical existence of particular men and women who die or particular things that decay before Eliot’s eyes. It seems as if Eliot were simply saying, as he does in his letter to Norbert Weiner, “In a sense, of course, all philosophizing is a perversion of reality: for, in a sense, no philosophic theory makes any difference to practice” (LI 87).

In this context, it would be stimulating to hear Deleuze repeatedly talk about death, his death (“Once again: I die! But that is going to involve lots of things”), in his seminar at Vincennes, March 10<sup>th</sup> 1981, entitled “The actual infinite-eternal, the logic of relations”,<sup>164</sup> in which he discusses the “conception of individuality” as “one of the newest elements of Spinozism”. According to Deleuze, “it is as if an individual, whatever individual, had three layers, as if it was composed, then, of three layers”: [1] Every individual, as such, is an infinite set of infinitely small parts (“the actual infinite”); [2] An infinite set of infinitely small parts belongs to me, and not to someone else, insofar as this infinite set puts into effect [*effectue*] a certain relation (“differential relations”); [3] The characteristic relations which constitute me (the relations of movement and rest, i.e., “immediate infinite modes”) serve only to express a “singular essence” – with these three layers, finally, one can say, “I exist”. It is here that Deleuze brings up the question of what happens if “I die!”:

That which disappears with death is the effectuation of the relation, it is not the relation itself. . . . [B]oth the relation and the essence are said to be eternal, or at least to have a species of eternity – a species [*espèce*] of eternity doesn’t at all mean a metaphoric eternity – it is a very precise type of eternity, that is to say that: the species of eternity in Spinoza has always signified what is eternal by virtue of its cause and not by virtue of itself – therefore the singular essence and the characteristic relations in which this essence expresses itself are eternal, while

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<sup>164</sup> Those *Cours Vincennes: Intégralité du cours 1978 -1981* (“Sur Spinoza”) are available on line at Webdeleuze (<http://www.webdeleuze.com>).



what is transitory, and what defines my existence, is uniquely the time during which the infinitely small extensive parts belong to me, that is to say put the relation into effect. But then there you are, this is why it is necessary to say that my essence exists when I don't exist, or when I no longer exist.<sup>165</sup> In other words there is an existence of the essence which is not confused with the existence of the individual whose essence is the essence in question. There is an existence of the singular essence which is not confused with the existence of the individual whose essence is the essence in question. (Webdeleuze)

I have quoted in great length from Deleuze's later seminar, for I believe this passage responds summarily to the three "difficulties" Eliot has found in Spinoza, discussed in this chapter. It seems, after all, that all these "difficulties" relate to the problem of this "very precise type of eternity" that is "eternal by virtue of its cause and not by virtue of itself". Eliot apparently regards an "individual" being as a substantial (global) whole – I would call it, after Deleuze and Guattari, a "molar"<sup>166</sup> point of view – hence, when a human dies or a thing decays, it ceases to exist as an individual, i.e., it cannot be eternal; whereas Deleuze reads in Spinoza that an infinite set of infinitely small parts is constituted into an "individual" by the differential relations of the essence, singular as well as eternal – likewise, I would call it a "molecular" point of view – hence, even if I die ("durational

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<sup>165</sup> Cf. Letter XII: "Therefore, although [Modes] exist, we can conceive them as non-existent, from which it also follows that when we are considering only the essence of Modes, and not the whole order of Nature, we cannot from the fact that they now exist deduce that they will exist or not exist in the future, or that they existed or did not exist in the past." (*Correspondence* 117)

<sup>166</sup> These two terms, *molar* and *molecular*, are derived from physics and developed by Deleuze and Guattari, most notably in *Anti-Oedipus* (*passim*, esp. 280-91; 342-343; 366-367) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (*passim*, esp. 208-31). This is no place to make full investigation into these terms, but let us quote two passages from *Anti-Oedipus* that seem to be particularly apt in our context: "Let us recall the major traits of a molar formation or of a form of gregariousness (*herd instinct*). They effect a unification, a totalization of the molecular forces through a statistical accumulation obeying the laws of large numbers" (342); "[the paranoiac, reactionary, and fascisizing pole is defined] by these molar structured aggregates that crush singularities, select them, and regularize those that they retain in codes or axiomatics; [the schizoid revolutionary pole] by the molecular multiplicities of singularities that on the contrary treat the large aggregates as so many useful materials for their own elaborations . . . *the one* is defined by subjugated groups, *the other* by subject-groups" (366-7). For further discussion, see Massumi 47-58; Pearson 179-199; Holland 92-123; May 126-153.

existence”), the singular essence that expresses itself in particular relations that are “I” *exists* eternally by virtue of its cause that is God (“immanent existence”).<sup>167</sup> Comprehending the singular, eternal essence of a Mode, *produced* by God and *existing* apart from its durational existence (1p24, 1p25),<sup>168</sup> is indeed what is above called the “vertical” viewpoint, and Eliot’s lack of such a viewpoint causes all the “difficulties” here.

What Eliot finds as “*gâté*” – or “impotence”, which Eliot’s early poetry is obsessed with – is, in other words, a sign of power (*potentia*) by virtue of the essence, singular as well as eternal. Nothing mystical – but, instead, it lies at the very core of the philosophical question of “participation”:

above all, the very idea of the mode is in no sense a way of taking from creatures any power of their own: rather is it, according to Spinoza, the only way of showing how things “participate” in God’s power [la puissance de Dieu], that is, how they are parts of divine power, but singular parts, intensive quantities or irreducible degrees. As Spinoza says, man’s power is a “part” of the power or essence of God, but this only insofar as God’s essence *explicates itself* through the essence of man. (*Expressionism* 227)

“Participation” is distinct from “assimilation”. The latter means that a smaller particular being (*res particulares*), represented as individual from the molar point of view, is integrated into a bigger entity, represented as general and often disguised as universal (the Particular-General Axis). With “participation” in God’s power (i.e., the Universal, which is as infinite, eternal, and necessary as potential, *virtual*), by contrast, a mode can be singular (*res singulares*) as well as eternal (the Singular-Universal Axis). Hence, “individuation of the finite does not proceed in Spinoza from genus or species to individual,

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<sup>167</sup> It should be interesting to consider to what extent Eliot’s Indic studies did or did not contribute to the question of eternity / immortality.

<sup>168</sup> For this critical question with regard to God’s production of essence, see Deleuze, *Expressionism*, pp. 191-199, especially Note 8 (pp. 378-9) concerning “a surprising blunder” he finds in every translation of 1p24c.

from general to particular; it proceeds from an infinite quality to a corresponding quantity, which divides into irreducible intrinsic or intensive parts” (*Expressionism* 199; translation modified). Without the “vertical” viewpoint, one, like Eliot, tends to misread the singular participation in the Universal as a particular assimilation into the General, confusing the two axes.

The dire political consequences of such confusion will be the ultimate “problem” of the final chapter of this thesis – to briefly sum up in advance in the terms employed in this chapter, Eliot, by blinding himself to the “vertical” (Singular-Universal) axis (hence, finding “difficulties” in non-coincidence of essence and existence [3], thus eternity of all things [4], which he regards as a “damage” on the individual [2]), appears, at first sight, to celebrate particularity of durational individuals, never succumbing to the temptation of the Absolute, but, in fact, such *molar* “individualism” is so vulnerable to assimilation to a bigger individual, such as Nation or Empire (the Particular-General Axis), that the above-discussed proclivity of Eliot’s philosophy will find its full expression in the idea of “Tradition” as a covert ideology of Empire – this is, I am tempted to maintain, the real, and practical, “irony” of Eliot’s mis/reading Spinoza. But such a statement apparently goes too far at this stage of the thesis, so, for now, let us close this chapter by pointing out that the only marginal note Eliot has dropped between “difficult” (1p21) and “See L’évolution créatrice” (1app) is “ ? ” to 1p35: “Whatever we conceive to be in the power of God necessarily exists” (Vloten 55 / Boyle 29).

## **Chapter Four**

### **“La grosse difficulté de Spinoza” (II)**

That the glory of this world in the end is appearance leaves the world more glorious.

--- F. H. Bradley, *The Principles of Logic*

Every nature is Nature herself in one of her more specific and better articulated forms.

--- George Santayana, *Reason in Common Sense*

We now move on to Part II of the *Ethics*, in which we will find high concentration of Eliot's marginalia. It may be noted beforehand that there is one note (to *E* 2p37) that refers to a specific page of a specific text: “v. Joachim / p.176.” The text concerned is no doubt Harold Joachim's classic *explication de texte* of Spinoza's *Ethics* – *A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza* (1901). Joachim was, needless to say, Eliot's tutor at Merton College, Oxford, and a faithful disciple of F. H. Bradley. In the following analysis of Eliot's marginalia in Part II of the *Ethics*, we should keep it in mind that Eliot was not just reading but *studying* it with Joachim's *explication de texte* open by his side, especially its Book II, Ch. 2, entitled “Theory of Knowledge” – alongside, of course, with *The Nature of Truth* (1906) by the same author, one of the major sources of reference for Eliot's dissertation, which Eliot had, in fact, purchased and studied carefully while at Harvard – so that, by extension, Eliot's marginalia in this part are deeply connected with his doctoral dissertation, *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*, whose original title was “Experience and the Object of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley”.

***“comment une idée au dehors de Dieu peut être adequate”***

We have earlier confirmed that the four “difficulties” Eliot has listed on a blank page are, in fact, all one – after all, Eliot cannot accept Spinozian Ontology, for Immanence of Being, he believes, does not leave any room for the identity and independence of particular (durational) existences, defined as Modes in Spinozian system. But such simplification may not have been quite fair: if Eliot had phrased the first “difficulty” as “how there is nothing outside of God”, it would indeed be fair to summarize that the first is an overall general question that has led Eliot to the other three specific “difficulties”. And yet, the fact of the matter is that Eliot, in the first “difficulty” alone, deals specifically with the “idea”, rather than the “thing” or “existence” – positing the “idea outside of God” as the subject of the proposition, and then asking whether it can be “adequate”. The first “difficulty” seems, after all, categorically different, in that, unlike the other three, which are more or less commonsensical complaints about the Spinozian system, the first “difficulty” (“how an idea outside of God can be adequate”) is posed in an alternative, non-Spinozian system, where the applicability of a uniquely Spinozian conceptual tool (“adequate”) is to be tested. Besides, while the latter three are all concerned with the ontological status of Modes, more or less understood in terms of Extension, the first one involves the Attribute of Thought, the realm of “*idea*”, which leads us to Part II of the *Ethics*, “Concerning the Nature and Origin of the Mind”, where the *Ethics* appears to move from the theory of Substance (ontology) to the theory of knowledge (epistemology).<sup>169</sup> Indeed, it may even be fair to say that this Part II is all about “*idea*”,<sup>170</sup> and that its critical significance, hence

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<sup>169</sup> Cf. “The fact that Spinoza’s theory of the infinite intellect precedes that of the human intellect corresponds to the structure of the ontology of *Ethics* I, in which the discussion of infinite modes precedes that of finite modes. However, in *Ethics* II, the focus of the theory is on a particular finite mode, namely, on man as mind, i.e., on man considered under the aspect of perception (*percipere*) in the broadest sense: the perception of his own body, defined in accordance with previous empirical assumptions” (Bartuschat “Infinite” 195).

<sup>170</sup> I agree with Alan Donagan’s observation that “Spinoza’s Latin word ‘*idea*’ cannot be rendered

difficulties, lies in the “double reading”, if not necessarily simple ambivalence, of this very “*idea*”, namely, the necessary distinction between the *idea* that we are (“The human mind (*mens humana*) is the very idea or knowledge of the human body” (*E* 2p19d)) and the *idea* that we have (“By IDEA (*idea*) I understand a conception of the mind which the mind forms by reason of its being a thinking thing” (*E* 2def3)).<sup>171</sup> The former is (a mode) in God’s Infinite Intellect, and the latter in the human mind. And this critical question ultimately amounts to that of “*idea adaequata*” – how it is ever possible for the finite human mind to acquire the knowledge that belongs to the infinite *idea* of God.<sup>172</sup> Read, to begin with, the Definitions 3 and 4, which appear on the first page of Part II:

- E* 2def3. By IDEA (*idea*) I understand a conception of the mind which the mind forms by reason of its being a thinking thing.
- . exp. I say conception rather than perception, for the name perception seems to point out that the mind is passive to the object, while conception seems to express an action of the mind.
- E* 2def4. By an ADEQUATE IDEA (*idea adaequata*) I understand an idea which in so far as it is considered without respect to the object, has all the properties or intrinsic marks of a true idea.
- . exp. I say intrinsic in order to exclude what is extrinsic, i.e., the compromise [*convenientiam*] between the idea and its ideal [*ideato*]. [Only Boyle here refers to *E* 1a6] (Vloten 72-73 / Boyle 37-38)

Compare this “adequate idea” with “a true idea”, postulated in Axiom 6 of Part I:

- E* 1a6. A true idea should agree [*convenire*] with its ideal (*ideatum*), i.e., what it conceives. (Vloten 38 / Boyle 2)

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into English than by adoption” (“Homo” 102). In what follows, I sometimes write “*idea*” in italics, so as to indicate that it is specifically used in the sense of Spinoza’s Latin usage.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. Gueroult II, 235-244; Also Deleuze *Practical* 73.

<sup>172</sup> It is often noted by the commentators that Spinoza uses “idea” and “knowledge” interchangeably.

At first sight, this axiom regarding a “true idea” as the “extrinsic”<sup>173</sup> agreement between *idea* and *ideatum* (i.e., the object) appears to be an exemplary and unequivocal statement of the so-called “correspondence theory” of truth, while, on the other hand, the “intrinsic” definition of an “adequate idea” apparently posits no referentiality to the outside object, so that it has provided many commentators with a clear evidence of the so-called “coherence theory” of truth.<sup>174</sup> Joachim, arguably the most representative commentator in the “coherence theory” camp,<sup>175</sup> apparently has little problem with the seemingly contradictory “correspondence theory” axiom, for an *idea* “agrees with” its *ideatum* simply “in the sense that it is the ideal side of its ‘ideatum’,” so that:

An idea is not made true by being brought into agreement with an object. Its truth is something belonging to it internally; a character, which constitutes its real being and distinguishes it from false ideas, as ideas which (*quâ* false) are not real or are deficient in being. And this internal character of a true idea – its adequacy – shows itself in the coherence, the clearness and distinctness, of its content.

(Joachim *Ethics* 149-150)

It should be of certain interest that Deleuze, at least on the mere face of it, seems to agree

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<sup>173</sup> Cf. Spinoza writes in his letter to Tschirnhaus (Letter 60): “I recognize no other difference between a true and an adequate idea than that the word true refers only to the agreement of the idea with its ideatum, while the word adequate refers to the nature of the idea in itself; so that there is really no difference between a true and an adequate idea except this extrinsic relation” (*Correspondence* 300).

<sup>174</sup> As for those disputed interpretations, see Thomas Mark’s balanced assessment of both standpoints (*Truth* 46-68) and sensible comment: “The two theories are believed by many people to be incompatible; if we wish to attribute them both to Spinoza we must show how they are related within his system” (54). See also Yovel’s useful analysis of two types of error: “in essence, error is due: (1) to a mismatch between true positive ideas and the things alleged to be their objects/ideata; or (2) to fragmentary, partial contexts in which true ideas are placed” (“Second” 103). The following argument in this section is generally concerned with the second type.

<sup>175</sup> “The coherence theory of truth has had a famous subsequent history, and was most explicitly formulated by the British idealist philosophers who followed Hegel; among the British idealists H. H. Joachim, a distinguished English expositor of Spinoza, made an extreme form of the theory explicit in his book *The Nature of Truth*” (Hampshire *Spinoza* 83).

with Joachim in his rejection of the correspondence theory: “The conception of truth as correspondence gives us no definition, either formal or material, of truth; it proposes a purely nominal definition, an extrinsic designation” (*Expressionism* 131). Pierre Macherey, Deleuze’s comrade-in-arms, explicates the same point more clearly:

In Axiom 6 of Book I of *Ethics*, Spinoza affirms the agreement (*convenientia*) of the true idea with its object. This proposition [axiom], which is not a definition, does not express the intrinsic character of the true idea: it does not constitute an idea starting from its cause but characterizes it only *a posteriori* through one of its properties as is confirmed by Definition 4 in Book II, which distinguishes the extrinsic and intrinsic qualities of the true idea. The notion of *convenientia*, which relates the idea to an object that is outside it, evidently designates an extrinsic quality. By contrast, the causal definition of the true idea determines it through its *adaequatio*: it is this concept, which is essential for Spinoza and which marks its rupture with the traditional conception of knowledge. In effect, by *adaequatio* we must think of exactly the opposite of that which reveals itself as *convenientia*. (*Hegel* 60; translation modified)

These commentators seem to all agree on the significance of the “intrinsic” character of truth as “an adequate idea”, which effectively rejects the “correspondence theory” of truth, but their targets are, in fact, diametrically opposite. Joachim’s “adequate idea”, free from any extrinsic (or material) constraints, guarantees “the coherence, the clearness and distinctness”, i.e., the purely idealistic internal conformity ultimately found in *infinita idea Dei* – in other words, critique of the correspondence theory allows Joachim to exercise an idealist-monist purification of Cartesian dualistic epistemology. On the contrary, Macherey sees in the same concept “the outer limits [*l’extrême pointe*] of an idealism”: “an excess of idealism can also border on a materialism [as opposed to “vulgar materialism”] or at least produce certain materialist effects” (*ibid.*). When Macherey goes on to proclaim,



in the manner of the authentically Althusserian critique of ideology,<sup>176</sup> that “[t]he essential function of the category of *adaequatio* is to break [*rompre*] with the conception of knowledge as representation that continues to dominate Cartesianism” (*ibid.*), he is deeply in agreement with Deleuze’s statement that “an adequate idea is seen to be an *expressive idea*”, that is to say, “[i]n Spinoza the term ‘adequate’ never signifies the correspondence of an idea and the object it represents or indicates, but the internal conformity of the idea with something it expresses [i.e., causality, production, and power]” (*Expressionism* 133). An anti-representational “adequate idea” for Deleuze is, just as any singular thing [*res singulares*] under any other Attribute, *expressive* of Substance – what Michael Hardt calls “an ontologization of epistemology”<sup>177</sup> – or, in Macherey’s words again, “ideas are just as much ‘things’ as some other affection of substance, whatever it may be” (*Hegel* 106). Eliot is, as we will discuss presently, sceptic of an idealistic reading through and through, but, at the same time, there is no sign that he shows any interest in the question of “ontological truth”,<sup>178</sup> involved in Spinoza’s unique conceptualization of the “adequate” idea as anti-representational. In fact, it seems as though Eliot simply did *not* read the

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<sup>176</sup> Cf. “The function of the idea of adequation is thus, first of all, critique. It permits us to expunge from the causal determination of the idea everything that arises from another order, according to which, for example, its *ideatum*, its object, also necessarily exists . . . Between ideas and things, there exists no relationship of correspondence that subordinates one to the other but rather a causal identity that establishes each one of them in the necessity of its order, or of its movement, or better still of its own process” (Macherey *Hegel* 64; translation modified). Compare this view of Spinozian “critique” with Althusserian concept of “relative autonomy” (*Reading passim.*).

<sup>177</sup> “The ontological critique of the clear and distinct idea prepares the terms for Spinoza’s shift from the true idea to the adequate idea. . . . We can see Spinoza’s insistence on replacing the Cartesian clear and distinct with his conception of adequateness as an ontologization of epistemology” (Hardt *Apprenticeship* 89-90).

<sup>178</sup> Thomas Mark, after successfully critiquing the British idealists’ mis/reading of Spinoza as their fellow coherent theorist, concludes: “it seems to me that [Spinoza’s] theory of truth is better seen as a version of ontological truth [i.e., “a very old tradition” of truth as being] than as a version of the coherence theory of nineteenth- and twentieth-century idealism” (88-9). Michael Hardt, who is usually dismissive of Anglo-American Spinoza scholars, gives a high mark to this “perceptive American commentator” as almost proto-Deleuzian – but with certain reservation: “Deleuze’s reading is consistent with Mark’s to a certain point, but the crucial factor is that Mark does not recognize, as Deleuze does, the central relationship between truth and power” (*Apprenticeship* 131).

word “adequate” at all.

The most significant propositions concerning “true” and “adequate” are those following *E* 2p32, especially 2p32-2p35, where we also find Eliot’s marginalia:

*E* 2p32. All ideas, in so far as they have reference [*referunter*] to God, are true.

*E* 2p32d. Now all ideas which are in God must entirely agree [*omnio conveniunt*] with their ideals [*ideatis*] (2p7c): and therefore (1a6) they are true. *Q.e.d.* (Vloten 99 / Boyle 63)

[Eliot’s note:] But what is the / relation of an idea / and its meaning?

Since there is no outside-of-God in Spinozian system, what this proposition states seems, technically, that *every single idea is true*. It then seems to follow that it is nonsensical to talk of truth and falsity at all – if indeed that were the case, the theory of knowledge would be nullified. It is here that the uniquely Spinozian concept of “adequacy” comes in: according to Wallace Matson, “[t]he adverb ‘entirely’ (*omnio*) [in *E* 2p32d] shows further that agreement [of an *idea* with its *ideatum*], and therefore truth, has degree. Falsity is only minimal truth: *E* 2p33, 35. Maximal truth is adequacy: *E* 2p34” (73). The criterion of “adequacy” is, to use an apt phrase coined by Della Rocca, “mind-relative”, that is to say, “a particular idea may be inadequate insofar as it is in the human mind (since that idea is caused from outside the human mind), but adequate insofar as it is in God’s mind (since that idea is not caused from outside God’s mind). An idea cannot be adequate or inadequate intrinsically, but only relative to a particular mind of which it is a part” (*Representation* 56). In other words, an idea is adequate (“maximal truth”) insofar as it is *referred to* God’s mind (*E* 2p34), whereas it is inadequate or false (“minimal truth”) insofar as it is *referred to* the human mind (*E* 2p33, 35).

Joachim’s *Nature of Truth* also devotes several pages to explicating these propositions of Spinoza’s *Ethics* in its concluding chapter on “The Negative Element and

Error”<sup>179</sup>:

Thus, ‘in God’ there is no error; for ‘in God’ all ideas are in their coherent context, and therefore complete and adequate [E 2p32]. And the mere partialness or inadequacy of an idea in the human mind does not *of itself* constitute error. For this is a mere absence of a supplementation, a sheer negative exclusion. There is no positive quality in the inadequate idea *as such*, which must be referred to God as a feature of his being [E 2p33]. The idea, which *as referred to a particular human mind* is fragmentary and inadequate [E 2p35], in God’s Thinking – as distributed over other minds – is complete and adequate [E 2p34].

(*Nature* 159; Joachim’s italics)

For Joachim, “God” is the name for the “coherent context” (i.e., the Absolute), in which each idea is *of itself* true but maintains a “degree of truth” (adequacy / inadequacy) relative to “God’s Thinking” (i.e., “Infinite Intellect”). It is more than obvious that Joachim’s above reading of Spinoza’s conception of “adequate ideas” directly corresponds to the doctrine of “Degrees of Truth (and Reality)” at the core of the “coherence theory”, of which Joachim was then most representative. Compare, for instance, the following representative passage from the same monograph, found in the section, “Degrees of Truth”, of the chapter, “Truth as Coherence”:

The degree of ‘its’ [a judgment’s] truth depends upon the degree of wholeness or self-containedness of the meaning expressed in such a system, i.e. depends upon the completeness of the coherence of the system. And this result seems to confirm the ideal of truth, as we described it in terms of the coherence-notion. For the ideal of absolute truth, by reference to which we are measuring the relative degrees of truth in the various systems of judgements, and (through them) in the

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<sup>179</sup> “Now the monistic system of Spinoza stands out in the history of philosophy as representing the kind of position which we have been trying to develop and maintain. And if we trace the outlines of Spinoza’s theory of the nature of things, and follow him in his endeavour to deal with the problem of error, we shall have corrected the vagueness of our present attitude” (Joachim *Nature* 148).

single judgements, is the completely individual, self-sustained, significant whole.

(*Nature* 113)

That the “relative degrees of truth” is measured “by reference to” the ideal of absolute truth, or “the coherence of the system”, is a concise description of Bradley-Joachim’s Absolute Idealism, as well as an almost verbatim translation of *E* 2p32.

A similar line of reasoning can be found in Eliot’s own discussion on the truth or falsity of the statements about unreal objects in Chapter 5 of his dissertation. For instance: “every inference is a true inference”; “All objects are real, and the unreality is not of them *qua* objects, but because of certain other relations into which (in their reality otherwise than as objects) they fail to enter” (*KE* 116, 120). And, even more to the point, Eliot discusses the reality and ideality of past and future in the following manner, which is reminiscent of Spinoza’s theory of memory (*E* 2p18s) as well as Eliot’s later theorization of “Tradition”:

Ideas of the past are true, not by correspondence with a real past, but by their coherence with each other and ultimately with the present moment; an idea of the past is true, we have found, by virtue of relations among ideas. Similarly, an idea of the future is not applied to the real complex which shall represent the realization or falsification of this idea. . . . The reality of the future is a present reality, and it is this present future-reality of which our ideas of anticipation are predicated, and with which they are identified. . . . The reality is immanent to the idea, or else the idea is not the idea of that reality. (*KE* 54-55)

In short, Eliot, like Joachim and Joachim’s reading of Spinoza, does not regard error (falsity or unreality) as intrinsic to a particular (subjective) point of view or its (“real”) object *as such*, but instead as only relative to the context – that is to say, Eliot accepts the idealistic doctrine of “Degrees of Truth and Reality”.<sup>180</sup> At this point, it is, I believe, worth quoting

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<sup>180</sup> Cf. “Out of absolute idealism we retain what I consider its most important doctrines, Degrees of Truth and Reality and the Internality of Relations” (*KE* 153).

at some length from F. H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* a passage concerning the doctrine of degrees of truth and reality, so that we may understand how strikingly similar in essence his doctrine is to Spinoza's:

In short the doctrine of degrees in reality and truth is the fundamental answer to our problem. Everything is essential, and yet one thing is worthless in comparison with others. Nothing is perfect, as such, and yet everything in some degree contains a vital function of Perfection. Every attitude of experience, every sphere or level of the world, is a necessary factor in the Absolute. Each in its own way satisfies, until compared with that which is more than itself. Hence appearance is error, if you will, but not every error is illusion. At each stage is involved the principle of that which is higher, and every stage (it is therefore true) is already inconsistent. But on the other hand, taken for itself and measured by its own ideas, every level has truth. It meet, we may say, its own claims, and it proves false only when tried by that which is already beyond it. And thus the Absolute is immanent alike through every region of appearances. There are degrees and ranks, but, one and all, they are alike indispensable. . . . There is truth in every idea however false, there is reality in every existence however slight; and, where we can point to reality or truth, there is the one undivided life of the Absolute. (*Appearance* 431-432)

If we substituted "God" for "the Absolute" ("Perfection") and "modes" for "appearances", this passage would read as a paraphrase of Spinozian concept of truth as adequacy. Indeed, the final sentence, "where we can point to reality or truth, there is the one undivided life of the Absolute", might as well be regarded as corresponding to *E* 2p32: "All ideas, in so far as they have reference [*referunter*] to God, are true".

Eliot would certainly assent to every word of Bradley's above statement, except "the Absolute". Without appealing to "the Absolute [that] is immanent alike through every region of appearances" – that is to say, the Immanent God of Spinoza or the "coherent context" of Joachim – as the ultimate point of *reference* from which the degrees of truth and

reality are to be measured, Eliot seems to rely on the scheme of “transcendence”<sup>181</sup> by an “outside”<sup>182</sup> point of view, as he goes on to discuss:

We are unable to say, however, that one point of view is right and the other wrong, for we thus imply an element of identity, or of identical reference; the assertion of one point of view against another must be made from a third point of view, which somehow contains the first and the second. (KE 121)

Naturally, such “transcendence” by an “outside” point of view, which “somehow” contains the original two oppositional points of view (e.g. “right” and “wrong”), will go on *ad infinitum* (“as soon as we have realized that we have reached a third point of view we are already at a fourth” (*ibid.*)) without the ultimate point of *reference* (“there is a constant transcendence of object into reference, and the absolutely objective is nowhere found” (KE 68)). Eliot’s reading of Bradley / Joachim reading Spinoza as regards the propositions concerning the truth and adequacy of *ideas* (E 2p32-p35) is, as it were, Spinoza *without* God, Bradley *without* the Absolute, or, to put it slightly more discursive, Degrees of Truth (hence, relativity of truth and error) *without* Adequacy (whose criteria are relative to the ultimate *reference* point).

In this context, it is interesting that Eliot gives notes to both E 2p33 and E 2p35 (on falsity), but skips E 2p34 (on adequacy):

E 2p33. There is nothing positive in ideas, wherefore they could be called false.

E 2p33d. If you deny this, conceive, if possible, a positive mode of thinking which would constitute the form of error or falsity. This mode of

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<sup>181</sup> According to Wollheim, “transcendence” is “the Anglo-Hegelian word for the process by which something is taken up into a larger whole” (Art 237), i.e., *Aufhebung*.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. “The real and the unreal are, from the outside point of view which we attempt to take as epistemologists, equally real, and our consequent troubles are due to the fact that these contrasts arose and have their meaning, only from the internal point of view which we have abandoned in seeking an explanation.” (KE 136)

thinking cannot be in God (2p32), and outside God it cannot exist or be conceived (1p15). Therefore there is nothing positive in ideas, wherefore they could be called false. *Q.e.d.*

[Eliot's note:] There could be no / wrong if there were / no right: contrast / is not between right / and wrong, but be- / tween part and / whole

*E* 2p34. Every idea in us which is absolute, or adequate and perfect, is true.

*E* 2p34d. When we say that an adequate and perfect idea is granted in us, we say nothing else than that (2p11c) there is granted in God an adequate and perfect idea in so far as he constitutes the essence of our mind, and consequently (2p32) we say nothing else than that such an idea is true. *Q.e.d.*

[no marginalia]

*E* 2p35. Falsity consists in privation of knowledge which is involved by inadequate or mutilated and confused ideas.

*E* 2p35d. Nothing positive is granted in ideas which could constitute their form of falsity (2p33). But falsity cannot consist in mere privation (for minds, not bodies, are said to err and be mistaken), nor in mere ignorance: for ignorance and error are two different things. Wherefore it consists in the privation of knowledge which is involved by inadequate knowledge or inadequate or confused ideas. *Q.e.d.*

(Vloten 99-100 / Boyle 63-64)

[Eliot's note<sup>183</sup>.] One cannot err simply / by not knowing

Eliot's reading of *E* 2p33 and 2p35 is, in a sense, consistent with his argument, à la Joachim, on the "degrees" of truth and error (right and wrong), relative to the context, or the fullness of relations (whole and part). In fact, Eliot's example of the child's illusory

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<sup>183</sup> Eliot also notes "sed/" to *E* 2p35s, but it is obvious that he only points out the typographical error in the second line ("fed ad uberiozem hujus rei . . ." (Vloten 100) – "fed" for "sed").

bear (which leads to the above quoted pronouncement: “every inference is a true inference”) and Spinoza’s famous example of the distance of the sun (which illustrates *E* 2p35, just quoted) are very similar in essence:

[The child] does not know just what it has perceived when it has been frightened by a ‘bear’, nor do we know what it has perceived. For as the difference between real bear and illusory bear is a difference of fullness of relations, and is *not* the sort of difference which subsists between two classes of objects, so the one word must cover both reality and error. The only case in which it is possible in any sense to say that a perception is ‘mistaken’ is when there is actually before us an object closely enough resembling the object of the erroneous perception to justify our saying that it was this object which we perceived and from which we made false inferences . . . (*KE* 116)

Thus when we look at the sun we imagine that it is only some two hundred feet distant from us: which error does not consist in that imagination [*imaginatio*, i.e., representation] alone, but in the fact that while we thus imagined it we were ignorant of the cause of this imagination and the true distance. For although we may afterwards learn that the sun is some six hundred times the earth’s diameter distance from us, we imagine it nevertheless to be near to us: for we do not imagine the sun to be near because we are ignorant of the true distance, but because the modification of our body involves the essence of the sun in so far as the body is affected by it. (*E* 2p35s)

In both cases, perception or representation (*imaginatio*) is neither true nor false *per se*, but the degrees of their truth or reality (i.e., “adequacy”) are relative to what Eliot calls the “fullness of relations”, which is, in effect, equivalent to Spinoza’s “reference to God”.

And yet, again, what Eliot does *not* read is as significant as how he reads what he reads. In these significant propositions dealing with the degrees of truth, Eliot comments only on falsity that is relative, but not on adequacy that “is granted in God”. Besides, he switches the terms, perhaps unawares, from “truth” / “false” to “right” / “wrong” (as in his



dissertation), and from “God” to “whole”. If compared with the above-quoted discussion on the “transcendence” of the right and wrong points of view *ad infinitum*, Eliot’s blindness and replacements (or “transference”) here are, hair-splitting as they may seem, quite significant: Eliot’s “whole” is, unlike “God”, also relative in each moment of “transcendence”, hence doomed to become “partial” again in the face of a larger “whole”. In other words, Eliot’s blindness to “adequacy” (hence to the *reference to God*) cannot but lead to infinite regress in his epistemology, which most likely takes the form of scepticism, if not necessarily agnosticism. It is, in this respect, quite symptomatic that Eliot’s comment is “There could be no wrong if there were no right” – as if the proposition concerned postulated non-existence of “right” / “whole” / “God” – rather than “There could be no right if there were no wrong”, which certainly makes more sense as a critique of the proposition that may be paraphrased as “There can be no (positive) falsity *because* every *idea* is true (insofar as it is referred to God)”, which might as well be taken for a dogmatic statement, unless the significance of “adequacy” (i.e., the bracketed words in the above paraphrase) were properly understood. Also, from a similar perspective, “One cannot err simply by not knowing”, rather than “Error consists of privation of (adequate) knowledge”, sounds rather queer, as Eliot seems to be more interested in the human capability of committing error than in the intrinsic character of error as “inadequacy”, suggesting that ignorance be not enough. Indeed, it seems as though Eliot were obsessed with the existence of “Wrong” (independent of the existence of “God”) and the possibility of “Error” (regardless of “adequacy”, or *reference to “God”*), and it may well be this obsession that makes him blind to the significance of Spinozian conception of “truth”-cum-“adequacy”, whose necessary and sufficient condition is the *reference to God*.

In fact, Eliot’s markings and marginalia to the propositions running up to *E* 2p32 – those which demonstrate the “inadequacy” of *ideas* in the human mind – well attest to his discontent, if not obsession, with the unfathomable gap between God’s knowledge and the human knowledge, which gap necessarily makes the latter unable to have *adequate ideas*:

E 2p26c. In so far as the human mind imagines an external body, thus far it has no adequate knowledge of it.

E 2p26cd. When the human mind regards external bodies through the ideas of the modifications of its own body, we say it imagines (Note on 2p17): nor can the human mind in any other way imagine (2p26) external bodies as actually existing. And therefore (2p25) in so far as the mind imagines external bodies, it has no adequate knowledge of them. *Q.e.d.*

E 2p28d. . . . But (2p24 & 2p25) adequate knowledge of external bodies, as also of the parts composing the human body, is not in God in so far as he is considered as affected by the human mind, but in so far as he is considered as affected by other ideas. These ideas of modifications, in so far as they have reference [*referunter*] to the human mind alone, are like consequences without premisses, that is (as is self-evident), confused ideas. *Q.e.d.*

[Eliot's note:] God's knowledge / is intrinsically / of a different / sort from ours?

E 2p29c. Hence it follows that the human mind, whenever it perceives a thing in the common order of nature, has no adequate knowledge of itself, nor of its body, nor of external bodies, but only a confused and mutilated knowledge thereof. For the mind knows not itself save in so far as it perceives ideas of modifications of the body (2p23). But it does not perceive its body save through the ideas of modifications [2p19], through which also it only perceives external bodies (2p26). . . .

E 2p29s. I say expressly that the mind has no adequate but only confused knowledge of itself, of its body, and of external bodies, when it perceives a thing in the common order of nature, that is, whenever

it is determined externally, that is, by fortuitous circumstances, to contemplate this or that, and not when it is determined internally, that is, by the fact that it regards many things at once, to understand their agreements, differences, and oppositions one to another. For whenever it is disposed in this or any other way from within, then it regards things clearly and distinctly, as I shall show further on.

E 2p30d. . . . Therefore the duration of our body depends on the common order of nature and the disposition of things. But there is in God an adequate knowledge of the reason why things are disposed in any particular way, in so far as he has ideas of all things, and not in so far as he has only a knowledge of the human body (2p11c). Wherefore the knowledge of the duration of our body is very inadequate in God in so far as he is considered as constituting only the nature of the human mind, that is (2p11c), this knowledge is very inadequate in our mind. *Q.e.d.*

[Eliot's note:] ? / How can this / be, exc. through [?] / the attribute of / mind? / And can mind / have ideas exc. / modally? / It is apparently / possible for God / to have ideas / of ideas.

E 2p31. We can only have a very inadequate knowledge of individual things [*de durantione rerum singularium*] which are outside us.

E 2p31c. Hence it follows that all individual things [*omnes res particulares*<sup>184</sup>] are contingent and corruptible. For we can have no adequate knowledge concerning their duration (2p31), and this is what must be understood by the contingency of things and their

<sup>184</sup> As for the hitherto neglected distinction between *res singulares* and *res particulares*, see Asakura, especially pp. 126-143. See also Deleuze for the three components Spinoza's theory of existence involves, namely, "a singular essence", "a particular existence" and "an individual form" (*Expressionism* 209).

liability to corruption (*vide* Note 1, 1p33). For (1p29), save this, nothing is granted to be contingent.

(Vloten 96-99 / Boyle 60-63; Eliot's underlines and vertical bars)

It is significant that Eliot, reading those passages concerning the fatal “inadequacy” of *ideas* in the human mind, is full of question marks, two of which seem to represent his problems particularly well: “God’s knowledge is intrinsically of a different sort from ours?” (to *E* 2p28d) and “And can mind have ideas exc. modally?” (to *E* 2p30d). These misguided questions are, it is safe to say, both deeply rooted in Eliot’s rejection of the Substance–Mode system, as has been discussed in the previous chapter. Without accepting the ontological foundation of Spinoza’s Substance monism, Eliot seems to be flirting with the possibility of regarding the human mind as substantial (or, at least, independent) rather than modal – such an attitude has, it goes without saying, been ingeniously denounced by Spinoza himself in the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*. From such a perspective, then, the above demonstrations of how the human mind always fails to form adequate *ideas* with regard to virtually anything would certainly strike Eliot as just a lengthy, kill-joy “perversion of reality”, so that, even when *E* 2p32 – 2p35 finally, after all the preceding destructive propositions on the human “inadequacy” has prepared the way, bring up the *reference to God* as the necessary and sufficient condition of “truth”-cum-“adequacy”, Eliot does not react to the ontological question of “God” and/or “adequacy”, but instead makes another puzzling, seemingly out-of-context question, “But what is the relation of an idea and its meaning?”, and simply goes on with the epistemological questions of “wrong” and “error”.

It must, however, be noted that the destructive propositions concerning the human “inadequacy” are not a complete *huis clos*, but there is a “Way Out” sign, which, in fact, Eliot has marked off by an emphatic double bar and underline: the human mind can have only inadequate ideas, but “not when it is determined internally, that is, by the fact that it

regards many things at once, to understand their agreements, differences, and oppositions one to another. For whenever it is disposed in this or any other way from within, then it regards things clearly and distinctly, as I shall show further on” (*E* 2p29s). Indeed, Spinoza will later show “how an *idea* in the human mind can be adequate” in terms of “common notions” (or “science”), which we will presently discuss fully. For now, it is of great significance to point out the fact that Eliot has noticed, most emphatically, the “deductive”<sup>185</sup> possibility for the human mind to acquire certain “adequate ideas”. Nevertheless, the question, or “the great difficulty”, that he has found here instead is “how an idea outside God can be adequate”, rather than “how an idea in the human mind can be adequate”. Together with the queer phrasing of the above-mentioned questions as to “Wrong” and “Error”, it seems as if Eliot, as a reader of the *Ethics*, placed himself in a topsy-turvydom, where one must *somehow* begin without God – much like, ironically, in the manner of what Eliot is later to denounce as “modern heresy” in the infamous *After Strange Gods*. Indeed, the analogy Spinoza employs in the above-quoted Demonstration of Proposition 28 seems most apt to describe Eliot reading Spinoza: “These ideas of modifications, in so far as they have reference [*referunter*] to the human mind alone, are like consequences without premisses” (*E* 2p28d). Such an “inadequate” reading will never lead one to the point where “he who has an adequate idea or (2p34) who knows a thing truly must at the same time have an adequate idea of his knowledge or a true knowledge, that is (as is self-evident), he must at the same time be certain [of the truth]” (*E* 2p43d).<sup>186</sup> Eliot’s theory of the “point of view”, briefly discussed above, may be seen in this light as a typical case of “consequences without premisses and/or end”. As discussed above, Spinoza’s “adequate idea” – *ontologized à la* Deleuze-Macherey – is, by expressing

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<sup>185</sup> Yovel takes the passage concerned “to refer to deductive (rather than inductive) relations, where the mind, in a single overview, intuits the consequence’s derivation from its antecedents as flowing from what is mutually common and different in them” (“Second” 100).

<sup>186</sup> This demonstration is followed by the scholium that contains the celebrated dictum, “Clearly, just as light shows itself and darkness also, so truth is a standard of itself and falsity” (*E* 2p43s), which is also underlined by Eliot.

another while being expressed by yet another on a purely immanent plane (or *concatenatio*) of ideas, ultimately *referred* to God's Infinite Intellect (hence, "adequate"); whereas Eliot's "point of view" – without any ontological basis – is, by transcending another while being transcended by yet another *ad infinitum*, doomed, like Prufrock, to drown in the ever-widening sea of doubt (or a limitless limbo of "inadequacy", if one prefers a Dantesque metaphor), i.e., that which is always to be transcended without end – without the ultimate point of *reference*.<sup>187</sup>

### **"But what is the relation of an idea and its meaning?"**

At this juncture, I believe, it is worth elaborating on the significance of the term "reference" in Spinozian system, which has been frequently mentioned in the preceding discussion. As already quoted, the important proposition 32 of Part II employs this term: "All ideas, in so far as they have reference [*referunter*] to God, are true" (*E* 2p32). Let us examine another example in Paragraph 42 of *TdIE*, which Eliot marks off by a vertical bar in the margin:

Again, from this last point we mentioned, namely, that an idea must agree in all respects with its formal essence [i.e., its *ideatum*], it is clear that in order that our mind may represent [*referat*] a true example of nature, it must produce all its ideas from the idea which represents [*refert*] the origin and source of all nature, so that it may become the source of other ideas.

(Vloten 13 / Boyle 239; Eliot's vertical bar)

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<sup>187</sup> Cf. "Everything, from one point of view, is subjective; and everything from another point of view, is objective; and there is no *absolute* point of view from which a decision may be pronounced." (*KE* 21-22)

Translating “*referre*” to “represent” is not only mistaken but symptomatic of the translator’s blindness to the non-representational nature of Spinozian system. It is in this non-representational nature, I submit, that the significance of Spinoza’s use of the term “*referre*” lies, and, moreover, it is this very nature that indeed characterizes the truly radical moment – “a feat of genius”, according to Hans Jonas<sup>188</sup> – of Spinoza’s so-called “parallelism”, to which, as I argue presently, Eliot makes himself blind.

But before we rush to the conclusion, let us refer to Harold Joachim again, who was apparently aware of the significance of “*referre*”,<sup>189</sup> so that he, in his posthumously published *explication de texte* of *TdIE*, “expanded ‘ut mens nostra omnio referat Naturae exemplar’ [Para. 42, quoted above] in conformity with Para. 91, ‘ut mens nostra . . . referat obiective formalitatem naturae, quoad totam, et quoad eius partes’” (Joachim *Tractatus* 100). Interestingly enough, to this paragraph 91, as well as a similar passage in the paragraph 99, Eliot also pays special attention by underlining the passages that involve “*referre*”:

The aim is to have clear and distinct ideas, namely, such as arise from the mind alone [*ex pura mente*: from the pure mind], and not from fortuitous movements of the body. Then again, in order that all ideas may be reduced to one, we shall endeavour to connect [*concatenare*] and arrange them in such a manner that our mind as far as possible may reflect [*referat*] objectively the formality (formalitas) of nature, both as a whole and as parts.

(Para. 91; Vloten 28 / Boyle 256-7; Eliot’s underlines)

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<sup>188</sup> Cf. “Surely, Spinoza’s parallelism of attributes expressing differently but equivalently one and the same substance was a feat of genius and far superior to all other treatments of the [Cartesian psycho-physical] problem at the time. Without interposing a synchronizing deity, as did others [e.g., the Occasionalists], it overcame Descartes’ dualistic rift by a monistic reduction, yet retained the full severity of the disjunctions which that dualism had been designed to ensure.” (Jonas “Parallelism” 124)

<sup>189</sup> Kokubun also emphasizes the significance of the word “*referre*” in Spinoza, although he does not acknowledge Joachim for that matter.

It is required with regard to order, and that all our perceptions may be arranged and connected, that as soon as is possible and consonant with reason we should inquire whether there be a certain being, and at the same time of what nature is he, who is the cause of all things: this we should do in order that his objective essence may be the cause of all our ideas, and then our minds, as I said, will reflect [referet] as much as possible nature; for it will have objectively nature's essence, order, and union. (Para. 99; Vloten 30 / Boyle 259; Eliot's underline)

Note that Spinoza's Scholastic-Cartesian use of "*formalis / formaliter*" and "*objectivus / objective*" is quite distinct from ours today.<sup>190</sup> Roughly speaking, a thing exists *formaliter* when it exists as a real (but not necessarily "extended") object outside of the mind (hence, Joachim, in the quotation below, regards the "formal essence" as equal to "*Ideatum*"; being-in-itself); whereas a thing exists *objective* when it is given in the mind as an *idea* (hence, accordingly, the "objective essence" is treated equal to "*Idea*" below; being-represented).<sup>191</sup> Hence, with respect to the "Two Powers" – the two equal, absolutely infinite powers (*potentia*) – of God, it can be said that "God's absolute essence is *objectively* the power of thinking and knowing, as it is *formally* the power of existing and acting" (Deleuze *Expressionism* 120; my italics). With this technical terminology in mind, let us read Joachim's "rather freely translated" exposition combining the Paragraphs 42 and 91 of *TdIE*:

<sup>190</sup> For a concise exposition of Descartes' use of these couple terms and Spinoza's adoption of and departure from such Cartesian usage, see Radner.

<sup>191</sup> It must, however, be quickly and cautiously noted that the distinction between *essentia formalis* and *essentia objectivum* (i.e., that between *ideatum* and *idea*) does not necessarily correspond to that between Extension and Thought, since both an *idea* and its *ideatum* can be modes of Thought, as in the case of *idea ideae* (to be discussed below) – it is in this respect that Macherey pronounces that "the idea is itself a thing" (*Hegel* 65), that is to say, the *idea* in Spinoza "as regards its formal essence can be the object of another objective essence" (*TdIE*, Para. 33). According to Thomas Mark, Joachim fails to explain the concept of Spinoza's method, owing to his inability to take note of this point (*Truth* 62). On the other hand, this distinction is particularly significant for Deleuze's ontological reading of Spinozian system in terms of "the two powers [*les deux puissances*] of God": "God's absolute essence is formal in the attributes that constitute his nature, and objective in the idea that necessarily represents this nature. . . . God's absolute essence is objectively the power of thinking and knowing, as it is formally the power of existing and acting" (*Expressionism* 120).



But actually all things in Nature have dealings with one another, i.e. are interconnected. Their objective essences, therefore, or Ideas will be interconnected too, and in the same manner. Hence, given any Idea, other Ideas will be deduced from it; and since these in turn will be connected with (and thus enable us to deduce) yet others, we shall continually gain fresh instruments for our intellectual advance. Moreover, since an Idea must agree in all respects with the formal essence which is its *Ideatum*, it is evident that our mind must produce all its Ideas from the Idea which reflects the origin and source of all Nature. This one Idea must be the source, from which all our other Ideas are derived, in order that our mind may reflect ideally [*objective*] in all respects its real Original – i.e. may reflect the formal essence of Nature in its totality and in all its parts.

(*Tractatus* 100)

With the help of Joachim's ingenious exposition,<sup>192</sup> we must carefully read the dense final sentence of Paragraph 91, which Joachim singles out by quoting the original Latin in a footnote and which Eliot underlines in his copy: "ut mens nostra, quoad ejus fieri potest, referat objective formalitatem naturae, quoad totam et quoad eius partes" (Eliot's underline).<sup>193</sup> It should not matter much whether the rendering of "*referre*" into "reflect" (Joachim and Boyle) or "reproduce" (Shirley, Curley, and De Dijn) is the best available, unless these verbs share with "represent" the connotation of a causal or hierarchical relation between *idea* and *ideatum*. Instead, what seems crucially important here is, as Joachim's above exposition amply shows, that the concatenation of ideas, or the mechanism by which one idea produces another and is produced by yet another, operates on a purely ideal [*"objective"*] plane and completely severed "from fortuitous movements of the body", and that, on this immanent plane of the attribute of Thought, *all* ideas are ultimately "referred"

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<sup>192</sup> Eliot also attests to Joachim's ingenuity in exposition of the classical texts: "[Joachim] is much better on historical problems than on constructive philosophy I think, and is really almost a genius, with respect to Aristotle" (*LI* 91). Joachim's *explication de texte* of *TdIE* is, in fact, his lecture notes posthumously reconstructed.

<sup>193</sup> Boyle translation above. In a more friendly translation by Shirley, it reads: "our mind, as far as possible, may reproduce in thought the reality of Nature, both as to the whole and as to its parts" (25; Eliot's underline).

to God's Infinite Intellect, or the "real Original" ("in its totality"), while *each* idea *somehow* "agrees with" its *ideatum* ("in all its parts"), i.e., each *idea* does not represent an *ideatum* as its cause but simply "refers" to it as *somehow* correlative.<sup>194</sup> This "somehow" of what may be called the non-representational correlation (a.k.a. "parallelism") between *idea* and *ideatum* (i.e., the necessary and sufficient condition of a "true idea") is no doubt based on "the metaphysical presupposition of the unity of substance", and is indeed the crux of Spinozian system, viewed not only metaphysically but materialistically.<sup>195</sup> On the other hand, the "referential" relation of *all* ideas to God's Infinite Intellect on a purely immanent plane of ideality (i.e., as modes under the attribute of Thought) concerns the question of an "adequate idea" – defined *intrinsically*, i.e., "in so far as it is considered without respect to the object" (*E* 2def4, quoted above).

We have here condensed two interrelated aspects of the non-representational nature of Spinozian system that is inscribed in the word "*referre*". In other words, the "reference" in "All ideas, in so far as they have reference [*referunter*] to God, are true" (*E* 2p32) involves two interrelated but distinct planes: (1) Adequacy: each *idea* is, by interacting with (*commercium habere*, i.e., producing and being produced by<sup>196</sup>) other *ideas* – thus "expressing" its own cause<sup>197</sup> – on the immanent plane of ideality, ultimately *referred* to God's Infinite Intellect (hence, the mind is "a spiritual automaton" (*TdIE*, Para. 85) that acts according to the "'relative autonomy" of the attribute of Thought); (2) Truth: each *idea*

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<sup>194</sup> A reader of Eliot may certainly be tempted to associate the argument here with Eliot's celebrated formulation of "objective correlative" (*SW* 100), but that does not seem particularly significant.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. "It is undoubtedly a question of a metaphysical solution. The correspondence between idea and ideatum is not the result of a critical research regarding the real but is certain from the start by the metaphysical presupposition of the unity of substance, governed by the laws that unfold in parallel within its two spheres of expression that are known to us: matter and thought. However, once freed from its metaphysical envelope, this theory encloses a principle that was to prove fruitful and – barring error on our part – to be taken up again, developed, and systematized by dialectical materialism." (Giancotti "Birth" 61-2)

<sup>196</sup> See Paragraph 41 of *TdIE*, especially Spinoza's own footnote: "To interact with other things [*Commercium habere cum aliis rebus*] is to produce, or be produced by, other things" (Vloten 13 / ).

<sup>197</sup> "Ideas do indeed 'represent' some thing, but they represent a thing precisely because they 'express' their own cause, and express the idea of God as determining that cause" (Deleuze *Expressionism* 138)

somehow agrees with its *ideatum* (E 1a6), hence the so-called “parallelism” (E 2p7), according to which the two (among infinite) autonomous, immanent planes – i.e., the order and connection of *ideas* in their totality (God’s Infinite Intellect, or God as *res cogitans*) and the order and connection of “things” in their totality (*natura naturata*, or God as *res extensa*<sup>198</sup>) – are mutually irreducible and incommensurable but somehow “the same [*idem*]” (hence, their relation is non-representational<sup>199</sup>). (1) + (2) = E 2p32, that is to say, Spinoza’s “*idea*” is doubly non-representational, in that (1) an *idea* does *not* represent its *ideatum*, but simply that they are “one and the same thing [*una eademque est*], which is now comprehended through this and now through that attribute” (E 2p7s); (2) an *idea* does *not* represent God or Nature (i.e., God’s *formal* essence), but is simply *referred to* God’s Infinite Intellect or *infinita idea Dei* (i.e., God’s *objective* essence). In short, an *idea* does not represent, for want of “truth”, any thing (i.e., any mode under any other attribute) either in part or as a whole, but instead expresses its own cause / essence<sup>200</sup> “adequately”, so that,

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<sup>198</sup> George L. Klein finds the term “*res extensa*” misleading and instead suggests “*res extendens*”: “But responsibility for Hegel’s misinterpretation must be laid at least partly at Spinoza’s own terminological door: when he characterizes God or Substance as *res extensa* (E 2p2) – an expression which Hegel renders accurately as *ausgedehnte Sache* (e.g., *Vorlesungen*, XIX, 387) – Spinoza’s use of the past passive participle misleadingly suggests passivity and inertness. Spinoza seemed unable to break with Cartesian terminology and continued to clothe a radical doctrine in traditional language. He might better have called God or Substance a *res extendens* on the model of the present active participles *res cogitans* and *natura naturans*. Spinoza’s Substance, in its activity of self-determination, its self-determining activity, is not only a *thinking* but also an *extending* entity: self-thinking and self-extending” (“Macherey’s” 373).

<sup>199</sup> Vijay Mascarenhas has, albeit through a different path, arrived at a similar conclusion: “This leaves us with the curious and, in fact, radical conception of knowledge being completely and wholly bereft of any representational content. Whereas Cartesian dualism executed an unbridgeable bifurcation between consciousness and representation – thereby opening the way to a kind of ‘hyperbolic’ solipsistic scepticism which is a solidification of the ‘hyperbolic’ doubt of the *Meditations* and comes about when God can no longer be relied upon to ensure that immediate consciousness does in fact bear a further relation to the external world of which one is conscious – Spinoza’s monistic parallelism heals the divide between consciousness and representation by conceiving of knowledge as purely non-intentional, non-representational cognizance of whatever extended mode it is united to by monism.” (“Consciousness” 95-6)

<sup>200</sup> A *locus classicus* on the subject of scientific knowledge as that through causes is the opening discussion in Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*, which Eliot studied intensively under the tutelage of Harold Joachim at Merton, Oxford.

by referring it to God's essence through the causal concatenation (*commercium*) of ideas, expresses the *idea* of God.

We are now ready, I believe, to revisit the “puzzling, seemingly out-of-context question” Eliot has left in the margin of the crucially important *E* 2p32:

*E* 2p32. All ideas, in so far as they have reference [*referunter*] to God, are true.

*E* 2p32d. Now all ideas which are in God must entirely agree [*omnio conveniunt*] with their ideals [*ideatis*] (2p7c): and therefore (1a6) they are true. *Q.e.d.* (Vloten 99 / Boyle 63)

[Eliot's note:] But what is the / relation of an idea / and its meaning?

It goes without saying that, in our context, a reader of this proposition should rather be talking about an *idea*'s non-representational “reference”, where Eliot instead brings up an idea's “meaning”, which presupposes a certain representational relation between an idea and that which is meant by it. Here, a well-informed reader may naturally be tempted to invoke Gottlob Frege's “*Über Sinn und Bedeutung*” (1892), which is often translated as “On Meaning and Reference” or, more recently, “On Sense and Reference”.<sup>201</sup> But it seems that there is involved certain anachronism in such association, since Eliot most certainly shared with Bertrand Russell the terminology – “meaning” and “denoting”.<sup>202</sup> In fact, Eliot, in his doctoral dissertation, uses “reference” and “meaning” interchangeably (“references or meanings can be handled in the same way as the objects to which they refer” (*KE* 59)) at one place, and, at another, gives the English word “meaning” to Meinong's “*Bedeutung*” (*KE* 93), while, in another chapter, he discusses Russell's “On Denoting” (i.e., “*Über Bedeutung*”) extensively, coming up with an almost Beckettian sentence: “in the use

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<sup>201</sup> As for the translation of these terms, see Michael Beaney's introduction to his edition of *The Frege Reader* (36-46).

<sup>202</sup> See, e.g., Russell's seminal essay, “On Denoting” (1905).

of any phrase we cannot always be sure to what extent we are meaning the denotation or meaning the meaning, and how far we are denoting the denotation or denoting the meaning” (KE 127) – which makes the issue quite confusing. Another may perhaps refer to the fact that the German word “*Vorstellung*” was then commonly translated as “idea”. For instance, Schopenhauer’s magnum opus in English translation by Haldane and Kemp (1883) is *The World as Will and Idea*, whose famous incipit reads: “The world is my idea” – certainly an extreme case of the representational worldview. Eliot, in passing, gives the word “presentation” to “*Vorstellung*” in his dissertation, adding to it a very suggestive footnote: “Should I apologize for the fact that my use of ‘idea’ does not correspond with that of any author with whom I am acquainted?” (KE 56) – which makes it even more confusing. Meanwhile, yet another may point out a totally different use of the word “idea” in the British empiricist tradition, as Russell’s *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912), which is one of the main references in Eliot’s dissertation, explains, “[Berkeley] gives the name ‘idea’ to anything which is *immediately* known, as, for example, sense-data are known” (38-39) – if that were in Eliot’s mind, asking the relation of an “idea” and its “meaning” might be directly connected to the question of the “immediate experience” and “its development into an articulate whole of terms and relations” (KE 21), discussed in the first chapter of his dissertation – which, however, does not make it any less confusing. In any case, we may probably be able to summon up as many meanings of “idea” and “meaning” as we like, and so we should perhaps stop here by just reminding ourselves of the fact that the time Eliot was trained as a philosopher was “the heyday of meanings” (to use a nice phrase by Ian Hacking), when “meanings were on the rampage” and “nearly every discipline had a critique based on meanings or else a theory about them” (Why 50-51).

Having said that, however, there is one text among them that cannot be summarily discarded – namely, F. H. Bradley’s *The Principles of Logic* (1883). Read, for example, the concluding remarks of Chapter 2 (“On the Distinction of ‘Real’ and ‘Ideal’”) of Eliot’s dissertation:

The question in what sense an idea is ‘meaning’, may now be resolved. I accept Bradley’s definition of a judgment as the predication of an idea of reality, and I agree that this idea is one whole. . . . But I maintain that for metaphysical purposes at least (*Logic*, p.3) the notion of idea as symbol is quite inadequate. An idea is not a symbol as a fox is of cunning, or an anchor of hope. You cannot so isolate existence and meaning, in the case of ideas. And to say that an idea is an identical reference is only partially true. There is however a sense in which it may be said that idea is meaning. . . . (KE 56)

As is presently discussed, the above notions (“idea as symbol”, “isolate[ing] existence and meaning”, “idea is meaning”, and even the “fox” as an example) all come from the opening pages of Bradley’s *Logic*, and, in a sense, the second chapter of Eliot’s dissertation is an ambitious attempt to intervene in the still-fresh debate that Bradley’s *Logic* has excited (Eliot here drops such names as Bosanquet, Moore, Russell, and Hoernlé; and, besides them, Bradley’s later development in *Appearance and Reality* (1893) and self-criticism in “On Floating Ideas and the Imaginary” (1908) should be included). I believe it is safe to surmise, even from this passage alone, that, when Eliot wrote down the question, “But what is the relation of an idea and its meaning?”, as a note to E 2p32, he most likely had in mind his own argument with regard to “idea” and “meaning” that heavily relied on the opening discussion of Bradley’s *Logic* – this will, in passing, be another additional evidence to our earlier speculation as to when and in what context Eliot read Spinoza. In fact, Eliot’s interest in this specific issue can be traced back at least to the seminar paper Eliot read for Josiah Royce’s seminar on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1914<sup>203</sup> – two months before his departure for Europe, in which Eliot claimed:

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<sup>203</sup> The draft of this paper on “Classification of types of objects” is now part of the Hayward Bequest of T. S. Eliot Material stored in King’s College Archive (King’s/PP/HB/P/4/f). The shorthand record by Harry T. Costello of this paper and the ensuing discussion in the seminar is available in Smith, ed. *Royce’s Seminar* (172-176).

Ideas like relations are not things; cf. [the] first chapter of Bradley's *Logic*. We tend to treat objects as things. If there were no things, these would be things. An idea is, e.g., the fulfillment of purpose; but this is another idea. A sign qua sign is not an object in the same sense as the object. In [an] idea there is only the *reference* and not the material part of the sign. Then there are facts. Then perhaps God! (Smith, ed. *Royce's Seminar* 173)

This paper on "Classification of Types of Objects" is apparently an embryonic form of his dissertation, whose original title was *Experience and the Objects of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*, and in whose conclusion he summarizes how "[w]e have thus distinguished broadly several types [of objects]: things, half-objects, double objects, and objects of reference" (*KE* 162). Among those types, "one of the most important classes" is "half-objects", which are "such as exist, like ideas, only from an internal-external point of view" (*ibid.*).

It now requires, I presume, no further excuse for delving into Eliot's reading of Bradley's *Logic* (especially its first chapter), but, before launching a philosophical argument, I would like to take a special note of the quite intriguing and indeed highly symptomatic final comment Eliot made in the ensuing discussion with Royce and several others on his paper: "In my theory there is something outside – e.g. beauty is outside, and distressed world, etc." (*Royce's Seminar* 176). Although it is hard to reconstruct from the shorthand record the exact context for such an abrupt "unphilosophical" statement, this sentiment, or desire, for "something outside" of philosophy – or, by extension, for the *outside* in general – is certainly deep-rooted in Eliot's *ethos* and is, for instance, echoed by the already-quoted outpouring in his letter from Oxford to Norbert Wiener: "I am quite ready to admit that the lesson of relativism is: to avoid philosophy and devote oneself to either *real* art or *real* science" (*LI* 88). In fact, the above-mentioned summary in the conclusion of his dissertation with regard to the object-types is immediately followed by a rather abrupt "leap" of argument:

But every transformation of [object-]type involves a leap which science cannot take, and which metaphysics must take. It involves an *interpretation*, a transmigration from one world to another, and such a pilgrimage involves an act of faith. (KE 163)

He then goes on to claim that “the notion of truth, literal truth, has so little direct application to philosophic theory”, which leads to a deconstructive, if not totally destructive, anti-philosophical statement: “A philosophy can and must be worked out with the greatest rigor and discipline in the details, but can ultimately be founded on nothing but faith” (*ibid.*) – a statement, indeed, reminiscent of his contemporary Wittgenstein<sup>204</sup> or even of the later Derrida. We must, I believe, always keep it in mind that Eliot is obsessed with this acute sense of the foundational (or “originary”) violence in any *order*, metaphysical or otherwise – the sense of *order* that maintains, to borrow Blackmur’s phrase again, “its intimate contact . . . with the disorder or the unknown order which gave it rise” (*Lion* 163) – even when he makes an apparently nonsensical, if not utterly ludicrous, statement, such as “*comment une idée au dehors de Dieu peut être adéquate*”.

*The Principles of Logic* (1883) by F. H. Bradley is often regarded as the British Idealists’ (a.k.a. Anglo-Hegelians) frontal assault on “the native philosophical school of

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<sup>204</sup> It should be of great interest to investigate to what extent (early) Wittgenstein is comparable here as a contemporary speculation on the issues of *order* within bounds. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, in its preface dated “Vienna 1918”, describes its “aim” as “to draw a limit to thought, or rather – not to thought, but to expression of thoughts”, so that it famously pronounces that “[t]he limits of my language mean the limits of my world” (5.6), where “in logic nothing is accidental” (2.012) while “outside logic everything is accidental” (6.3). Towards the end of the *Tractatus*, however, the issue of “value” enters and so does the shadow (or “specter”) of the *outside*: “The sense of the world must lie outside the world. . . . What makes it non-accidental cannot lie within the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental. It must lie outside the world” (6.41) – and so does the sense of the “mystical” of the world as it is: “It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists” (6.44); “There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical” (6.522). Note that both Eliot and Wittgenstein were *metics* in England (both closely associated with Russell), when Europe was disintegrating. Both abandon philosophy so as to seek the *outside*.



Empiricism”, especially John Stuart Mill’s anti-Teutonic *System of Logic* (1843), which, by then, “had received something like a canonical formulation” (Wollheim *Bradley* 18). Although Eliot himself showed in 1927 certain reservation as to such a stereotypical view concerning “the dust of Bradley’s logical battles”,<sup>205</sup> that very reservation seems to attest to the fact that it was indeed a received idea. From the outset, in fact, Bradley makes his target clear:

In England at all events we have lived too long in the psychological attitude. We take it for granted and as a matter of course that, like sensations and emotions, ideas are phenomena. And, considering these phenomena as psychical facts, we have tried (with what success I will not ask) to distinguish between ideas and sensations. But, intent on this, we have as good as forgotten the way in which logic uses ideas. (*Logic* 2)

The whole problem lies, according to Bradley, in the “ambiguity of ‘idea’” (6), so that he insists, first of all, on making clear distinction between the psychological “idea” and the logical “idea” (i.e., between the image and the meaning, the psychical event and the logical signification, the sensible reality and the “ideal content”,<sup>206</sup> particular and universal, etc.). Then, “for logic at least”, he discards the former, which is tainted with the Empiricist flavor, and salvages only the latter: “[a psychical fact] is for logic no idea at all. It becomes one first when it begins to exist for the sake of its meaning” (5); Soon, he goes as far as to identify the “idea” with the “meaning”: “it is better to say, the idea *is* the meaning, for existence [the “that”] and unessential content [the “what”] are wholly discarded” (6);

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<sup>205</sup> “Exactly what Bradley fought for and exactly what he fought against have not been quite understood; understanding has been obscured by the dust of Bradley’s logical battles. People are inclined to believe that what Bradley did was to demolish the logic of Mill and the psychology of Bain. . . . But Bradley did not attempt to destroy Mill’s logic. Anyone who reads his own *Principles* will see that his force is directed not against Mill’s logic as a whole but only against certain limitations, imperfections and abuses.” (Eliot “Francis Herbert Bradley” (1927); *SE* 448).

<sup>206</sup> “The ideal content is the logical idea, the meaning as just defined” (*Logic* 10). Note that “ideal” here is simply the adjectival form of “idea”.

Finally, universality is attributed to the “idea”, which is now the very foundation of Bradley’s logic: “The idea in judgment [i.e., proposition] is the universal meaning” (10). Here, again, Joachim’s exposition is useful, especially as it points towards where Eliot’s argument is headed, i.e., critique of solipsism and subjective idealism:

The distinction (which e.g. F. H. Bradley has used) between ‘idea’ as *psychical image* or *symbol* and ‘idea’ as *logical content*, is valuable as a statement of the sense in which the logician speaks of ‘idea’; and presumably it was never intended for any other purpose. The solipsistic individual, conscious originally of a succession of psychical events as his own, and conscious of these alone, is a discredited relic of subjective idealism, and no logician can be asked to explain by what process these psychical events are converted into logical contents or universal meanings. (*Nature* 118; fn. 1)

The same distinction is held, according to Eliot, by such diverse figures as Bosanquet (Bradley’s natural ally), Hoernlé (Eliot’s teacher at Harvard), and, rather unsurprisingly, Moore and Russell (Bradley’s foes)<sup>207</sup> (*KE* 40-41). Although Eliot draws mostly on Moore, who finds Bradley’s distinction still ambiguous and suggests the term “concept” (as an English translation of German “*Begriff*”) be substituted for “[idea as] a universal meaning” (“*Nature*” 177), he insists that even Moore’s distinction is still ambiguous, so that he proposes his own, more rigorous distinction between “idea” and “concept”: “A word, it is true, may mean or stand for, an idea. But there will never obtain an identity between the meaning of the word as concept, and the meaning of the word as idea. As an idea it is

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<sup>207</sup> Eliot’s inclusion of Russell’s name here is, of course, quite misleading, as he specifically criticized the “advocates of ‘ideas’”: “I think the theory [that judgments consists of ideas] itself is fundamentally mistaken. . . . I suspect that the view is fostered by the dislike of relations” (“*Acquaintance*” 175). See also his critique of the “axiom of internal relations” in “*The Monistic Theory of Truth*” (1906-7), which was, in fact, a direct response to Joachim’s *The Nature of Truth*, published in the same year. As for Moore’s article concerned (“*The Nature of Judgment*” (1899)), which he never reprinted, Anthony Manser “suspect[s] that Moore . . . was in a halfway stage between Idealism and his later views” (*Bradley’s* 69).

predicated of reality, assigned a place in a system – more or less complete – which is assumed as real. But the concept – greenness, or triangularity – does not as such qualify reality at all” (KE 39).

We are here not so much concerned with the validity of Eliot’s argument based on the stricter (so he believes) distinction between “idea” and “concept”, but the way in which he purifies and even apotheosizes the concept of “concept” seems of great interest. First of all, a “concept” is wholly undefinable: “The concept, in the first place, is extra-mental; it exceeds all actual and possible content, or definition. . . . a concept cannot be defined at all, for to define it is to restrict it to a definite circle of ideas” (KE 40). Eliot even calls it “a thing-in-itself”, which is, as such, beyond generality: “it can be suggested, rather than defined, through more and more general ideas, but is at no point to be identified with these ideas” (KE 46). Then the concept of “concept” comes precariously close to that of God: “In a sense, concepts are omnipresent, and in a sense, they are never known at all” (KE 46). At this point we cannot help suspecting that Eliot actually sees Appearance and Reality in “idea” and “concept” – in fact, he bluntly admits that “it is true that the concept is reality and the idea appearance” (KE 47). Indeed, when Eliot has earlier juxtaposed the two propositions without any conjunction (“it is true that reality exists only through its appearances. It is only in some sense in ideas that concepts exist.” (KE 40)), he has not only suggested the parallel with Bradleyan pair of Appearance and Reality, but also touched, perhaps unawares, upon another parallel with Deleuzo-Bergsonian pair of the Actual and the Virtual (See my Chapter Two) – in fact, Eliot casually mentions “an intuitive knowledge of [a concept] (if one likes to talk of intuition)” in the same context (KE 46). In other words, the purified “concept” here is another name of the Virtual, just like Reality, the Absolute, *la Durée*, and *Deus sive Natura*.

Perhaps we have gone too far. Let us halt at Eliot’s distinction between the mental “idea” and the extra-mental “concept”, and return to Eliot reading Spinoza. In this context, then, it would be most interesting to note that Jonathan Bennett, one of the most

representative latter-day Anglo-American (i.e., “analytic”<sup>208</sup>) commentators of Spinoza, makes a very similar observation as to “Spinoza’s Latin word *idea*”, albeit for a very different purpose:

We translate it by “idea”, and think of it as mental . . . But there is a way of taking ‘idea’ in which ideas are not mental at all. . . This is to use “idea” to mean what “concept” means in philosophy these days: an “idea” is a logical item, a constituent of propositions, something thinkable by many people. Much of the time Spinoza takes ideas to be propositionally structured, i.e., to be of the form “that P”, where P stands for a sentence; and then on the psychological reading and “idea” is a state or episode of believing that P or the like, while on the logical reading it is just the proposition that P. (*Study* 50-51)

Bennett’s analytic method aside, his reading of Spinoza’s “*idea*” is indeed suggestive: “But from time to time [Spinoza] makes his psychology double as a logic as well, taking the term ‘idea’ to stand indifferently for a mental item and for a concept or proposition” (52). Though he soon “plead[s] in [Spinoza’s] defence” by adding that Spinoza “was not alone in this tendency to conflate logic with psychology” (*ibid.*), Bennett is apparently dismissive of Spinoza’s confusion, just as Moore is of Bradley’s and Eliot, in turn, of Moore’s.

Deleuze, on the contrary, warns that confusion is on our side: “Ideas have a logical form that should not be confused with a form of psychological consciousness” (*Expression* 132), making it clear that this is a highly *theoretical* (i.e., ontological) issue concerning “adequacy”:

The idea is representative. But we have to distinguish the idea that we are (the

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<sup>208</sup> Cf. “Bennett’s study of Spinoza will no doubt be characterized as a piece of ‘analytic history of philosophy.’ To the extent that that (often deprecatory) label is justified, what justifies it is not that Bennett’s work is dominated by commitment to some distinctively 20<sup>th</sup> Century philosophical program . . . [but] that Bennett insists on asking whether Spinoza gives us any rational grounds for accepting the conclusions he reaches” (Curley “Bennett’s” 39).

mind as idea of the body) from the ideas that we have. The idea that we are is in God; God possesses it adequately, not just insofar as he constitutes us, but in that he is affected with an infinity of different ideas (ideas of the other essences that all agree with ours, and of the outer existences that are causes of ours without limit [i.e., “infinite modes”]). Therefore we do not have this idea immediately. The only ideas we have under the natural conditions of our perception are the ideas that represent *what happens* to our body, the effect of another body on ours, that is, mixing of both bodies. They are necessarily inadequate. (*Practical* 73)

Here, the logical / psychological distinction of “idea” is *ontologized* – what is distinct, and should be distinguished, from the psychological “idea” (“that we have”) is not the mere logical “idea”, but the *ontological* one (“that we are”), namely, the “adequate” idea, which does not “mean” (i.e., *represent*) anything, but is, as a non-representational *singular thing* [*res singulares*], referred to God.

We can now understand the meaning, or rather the symptomatic significance, of Eliot’s seemingly out-of-context question: “But what is the relation of an idea and its meaning?” to *E* 2p32 (“All ideas, in so far as they have reference to God, are true”). As we have seen in many cases, Eliot does not care about – or “neglect *consciously*” – the ontological question concerning the “reference to God”, but he does care about the epistemological question (involving logic and psychology<sup>209</sup>) as to how “all ideas” can ever be “true”. As his note to *E* 2p48s (“Intellect is abstraction. / There is only / the stream of / ideas.”) clearly shows, Eliot tends to regard an “idea” in Part II of the *Ethics* as a mere mental image. Since such an “idea” as a mental image, to use Bradley’s words again, “becomes [an idea for logic] first when it begins to exist for the sake of its meaning,” where the “idea in judgment is the universal meaning” (*Logic* 5, 10), it must certainly seem to

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<sup>209</sup> Cf. “The true and the false – i.e. propositions, their eternal relations, their combination into inferences, &c., &c. – are the subject-matter of Logic. Psychical phenomena – e.g. belief, apprehension, &c. – are the subject-matter of Psychology. Knowledge and Error are the subject-matter of Epistemology, a complex science involving both Logic and Psychology” (Joachim *Nature* 37).

Eliot utter nonsense to posit that, whatever “references” they might have, “all ideas” should ever be “true” regardless of their “meanings” – hence, “*But* what is the relation of an idea and its meaning?”

It is in this same context that the way in which Eliot reads *E* 2p40s2, which schematically explicates the “three kinds of knowledge” and introduces “*scientia intuitiva*” for the first time, should be understood:

*E* 2p40s2. From all that has been said above it is now clearly apparent that we perceive many things and form universal notions, first, from individual things represented [*repraesentatis*] to our intellect mutilated, confused, and without order (2p29c), and therefore we are wont to call such perceptions knowledge from vague or causal experience (*cognitio ab experientia vaga*); second, from signs, *e.g.*, from the fact that we remember certain things through having read or heard certain words and from certain ideas of them similar to those through which we imagine things (2p18s). Both of these ways of regarding things I shall call hereafter knowledge of the first kind (*cognitio primi generis*), opinion (*opinio*), or imagination (*imaginatio*). Third, from the fact that we have common notions and adequate ideas of the properties of things (2p38c, 2p39, 2p40). And I shall call this reason (*ratio*) and knowledge of the second kind (*cognitio secundi generis*). Besides these two kinds of knowledge there is a third, as I shall show in what follows, which we shall call intuition (*scientia intuitiva*). Now this kind of knowing proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things. . .

(Vloten 104-105 / Boyle 68; Eliot’s vertical bar)

[Eliot’s note:] Read this with / care for expo- / sition of the / parallelism / ----- / epistemo- / logical + / psychological / parallelism: / what is their relation?

Although Spinoza's duplicate use of "third" here may be rather confusing,<sup>210</sup> the "three kinds of knowledge" are clearly defined here, namely: (1) *imaginatio* ("picture-idea",<sup>211</sup> or (re)presentation) and *opinio* (hearsay or memory); (2) *ratio* (common notions / adequate ideas); (3) *scientia intuitiva* (the intellectual love of God). This famous scholium is not so much a résumé of what has been written, as a roadmap, drawn at this juncture, of the whole book – or rather, to use Deleuze's expression ("Three"), of "Three Books" ("the Book of Signs", "the Book of Concept", and "the Book of Essences or Singularities") – and there should be good reason to find such a roadmap towards the end of Part II, which has *theorized* how the human intellect, albeit caught in the tangled web of *imaginatio*, can make an *epistemological break* with it by forming a set of "adequate ideas" and thus hauling "common notions" out of "knowledge of particulars".<sup>212</sup> Part III and IV will, as it were, body out the theory dynamically and practically, and finally, as anticipated by the above roadmap, the warp engine will abruptly be switched on towards the end of Part V, "as if one jumped from a relative speed (the greatest) to absolute speed" (Deleuze "Three" 32).

It is, however, rather difficult to understand why Eliot has read "exposition of the parallelism" here – whose *locus classicus* is, of course, *E* 2p7 ("The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things"), with no direct bearing on this scholium to *E* 2p40. Moreover, what does "epistemological + psychological parallelism" mean? Here, it seems significant that Eliot does not write (a pair of) "parallelisms", but one "parallelism" that consists, presumably, of the epistemological plane and the psychological plane *in parallel*. What Eliot means here by "epistemological" and

<sup>210</sup> The first kind is subdivided into two forms, so that the second kind is introduced as "Third, from the fact that . . .".

<sup>211</sup> "[T]he world of 'imagination' may be called the 'world of presentation' – a world which we picture as a complex of external things acting upon one another and upon us. . . . And this persistence of the picture-idea need not cease, even though the external body which initiated out corporeal change is no longer acting upon us . . ." (Joachim *Ethics* 156).

<sup>212</sup> See Paragraph 98 of *TdIE*: "I have also said that the best conclusion will have to be drawn from a particular affirmative essence. For the more particular an idea is, the more distinct, and therefore the clearer it is. So we ought to seek knowledge of particulars [*cognitio particularium*] as much as possible." (Dijn 149; Eliot's underline)

“psychological” is not clear, but one classic definition by Henry Jones in “Idealism and Epistemology” (1893) may be helpful here:

Ideas as subjective phenomena are, in their [i.e., the critics of Idealism] view, to be dealt with by Psychology. They belong exclusively to the private history of the individual. But ideas as having objective reference, a meaning for all minds capable of apprehending them, form the subject-matter of Epistemology. The spheres of these sciences are quite distinct from each other and from that of Ontology. (297)

The distinction between Psychology (“ideas as subjective phenomena”) and Epistemology (“ideas as having objective reference, a meaning”) can obviously be comprehended in the same context that we have just discussed in terms of the opening argument on “ideas” in judgment in Bradley’s *Logic*. In fact, Jones, in the immediately following paragraph, apparently refers to the very argument of Bradley: “The distinction between ideas as mere occurrences in consciousness and ideas as having objective reference seems to me quite valid. Mr. Bradley has succeeded in putting this matter beyond reasonable dispute” (*ibid.*). In that respect, it is fair to say that Eliot’s questioning the “relation” of “epistemological + psychological parallelism” here is essentially similar to his earlier question with regard to *E* 2p32 (“But what is the relation of an idea and its meaning?”). In other words, just as he has earlier questioned the “relation” of a (psychological) idea and its (universal/-zed) meaning, so does he here problematize the celebrated “parallelism” in terms of the “relation” of what is “psychological” and what is “epistemological”.

Nevertheless, Eliot’s use of “parallelism” here is puzzling, to say the least, as *E* 2p40 is certainly not a place where this well-known technical term should normally be mentioned. To be sure, Eliot is not much concerned with what is commonly understood as Spinoza’s doctrine of “parallelism”, nor is he interested in the methodological scheme of the “three kinds of knowledge”. After all, as we have seen, he is not particularly interested in God



(3) or adequate ideas (2); Instead, his attention has probably been focused merely upon the “knowledge of the first kind” (which is “the only cause of falsity” (*E* 2p41) unlike the latter two kinds) – especially upon the mechanism of how “we perceive many things and form universal notions . . . first, from individual things represented to our intellect . . . [and] second, from signs”, that is to say, how our perception (i.e., psychological ideas / images) may be *transmuted* into certain universal notions (i.e., universal meanings). If so, Eliot’s understanding of “parallelism” is not only misplaced, but indeed fundamentally misdirected, that is to say, whereas the truly radical moment of Spinoza’s “parallelism” lies, as has been discussed above in terms of “*referre*”, in the non-representational, ontological co-extensiveness of the relatively autonomous attributes (e.g., the attribute of Thought and the attribute of Extension – more specifically, Mind and Body – among infinitely many others), Eliot’s “epistemological + psychological parallelism” amounts to a causal or representational relation between the “psychological” (mental images) as cause and the “epistemological” (extra-mental concepts) as effect. Such a symptomatic misdirection, or “mis/reading”, of Eliot’s in those two separate but essentially related questions as regards the “relation” (idea – meaning // psychological – epistemological) is, I submit, also consistent with his blindness to the ontological questions (“God” and/or “adequate ideas”). Besides, the fact that the body of his doctoral dissertation consists of an “entirely destructive”, or *deconstructive*, critique of “the Psychologist’s Treatment of Knowledge” (Ch. 3) and “the Epistemologist’s Theory of Knowledge” (Chs. 4 & 5) clearly shows that this symptomatic mis/reading does most likely underline his dissertation as well.

### **from Solipsism to Science**

Eliot’s questioning of the “relation” of “epistemological + psychological parallelism” (*E* 2p40s2) points back directly to his earlier marginal note to 2p13c (“Hence it follows that

man consists of mind and body, and that the human body exists according as we feel it”):

My idea and my / body are identical / in essence. / Now every time I / know an  
object that / relation is identical / with the psychological re- / lation of my mind +  
body. / Epistemological and / psychological relations / are the same. / Solipsistic:  
we know only our / own bodies. But in science / we know more than / our own  
bodies.

Although the “psychological” relation clearly means the “parallelism” between “my mind” and “my body”, what the “epistemological” relation exactly pertains to is not entirely clear (that between “my idea” and “my body”? Or, simply, the act of knowing?). But, at least, it is significant that this single marginal note contains virtually all the topics dealt with in the body of Eliot’s doctoral dissertation: Psychology (Ch. 3), Epistemology (Chs. 4 & 5), and Solipsism (Ch.6). Obviously, Eliot as a reader of Spinoza’s *Ethics* has here found a certain kind of *technical* interest in terms of his dissertation project. In fact, the pages 80 – 83 (*E* 2p10 – 2p13; Boyle 44 – 48) are the single most densely annotated – literally, every corner of the margins is filled with Eliot’s notes.

It is perhaps no accident that those propositions are where Part II (“Concerning the Nature and Origin of the Mind”) finally brings up its announced subject-matter, namely, the human mind, so that its *essence* (i.e., “nature and origin”) may be deduced. The deduction goes as follows: Firstly, it is reconfirmed that “man” is not a substance but a mode of Substance (“the essence of man is constituted by certain modifications of attributes of God” (2p10c)). Then, in the ensuing proposition, it proceeds from “man” to “the human mind” (“The first part which constitutes the actual being of the human mind is nothing else than the idea of an individual thing actually existing [*idea rei alicujus singularis actu existentis*]” (2p11)). Martial Gueroult, with his characteristic scrupulousness, finds “three steps” in the demonstration of this proposition: [1] “The essence of the human mind is an idea”; [2] “This idea is that of an actually existing thing [*une chose existant en acte*]”; [3] “The object

of this idea is not infinite” (*Spinoza II* 115-6; my translation). In other words, the human mind, or the “idea that we are”, is but a mode of Substance under the Attribute of Thought (hence, it is “a part of the infinite intellect of God” (2p11c)), whose object (*ideatum*) is an actually existing, singular (i.e., neither non-existent nor infinite) thing (hence, “the human mind perceives the thing only in part or inadequately” (2p11c)). Still, at this stage, we only know that the human mind is *idea* of something actually existing, so that the object of the *idea* constituting the human mind could be anything in so far as it is actually existing and singular (if so, there shouldn’t be any “unity” or “identity” of the human mind, for it would then possibly comprehend something totally outside of its corresponding mode of Extension, i.e., the body). But such inference is immediately denied by 2p12 (“Whatever happens in the object of the idea constituting the human mind must be perceived by the human mind, or the idea of that thing must necessarily be found in the human mind” (2p12)). Then, finally, the *essence* of the human mind is defined, by way of deduction, as an *idea*, whose object is nothing but the human body (“The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body, or a certain mode of extension actually existing and nothing else” (2p13)) – this definition is, according to Gueroult, “*la fin de la seconde étape du Livre II*” (*Spinoza II* 131).

The crux of those propositions (2p10-2p13) is, therefore, the definition of the human mind as an *idea* of the human body and nothing else, where it is an *ontological* definition, in that the *idea* concerned here (“the idea that we are [in God]”) is, together with its *ideatum* (the body), a modification of Substance (“a part of the infinite intellect of God”), categorically different from “ideas that we have” (representation, conception, perception, and so on) – the former *idea* is necessarily “adequate” (*as referred to* God’s Infinite Intellect), while the latter ideas “inadequate” (*as referred to* the human mind).<sup>213</sup> As we

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<sup>213</sup> See the above discussion in the previous section with regard to Deleuze’s distinction between “the idea that we are” and “the ideas that we have”. In Gueroult’s words, “The idea that the Mind is (in God) [is] not the knowledge [*connaissance*] that the Mind has” (*Spinoza II* 239).

will presently see in the detailed analysis of Eliot's abundant markings and notes to those passages, Eliot totally misses the crux by replacing the "idea that we are [in God]" by "ideas that we have", that is to say, more specifically, Eliot mis/reads those passages exclusively in terms of "perception" and "knowledge", directing his attention to the questions concerning the limits to, or the boundaries of, the perceiving subject (solipsism) and the possible over-the-limits object of knowledge (science) – the questions, in short, he struggles with in his dissertation, which was originally entitled "Experience and the Objects of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley".

Let us now look at Eliot's densest marginalia in order. As for *E* 2p10, Eliot skips its proposition and corollary pertaining to "man" as a modification of Substance, only to find interest in its scholium:

*E* 2p10s. All surely must admit that without God nothing can exist or be conceived. For it must be agreed in the minds of all that God is the only cause of all things both of their essence and of their existence, that is, God is not only the cause of things with regard to their creation (*secundum fieri*), but also with regard to their being (*secundum esse*). But at the same time there are many who say that that appertains to the essence of anything without which the thing cannot either exist or be conceived: and therefore they believe either that the nature of God appertains to the essence of things created, or that things created can exist and be conceived without God, or, what is still more certain, they cannot properly satisfy themselves what is the cause. The cause of this I think has been that they have not observed the order of philosophical argument. For divine nature, which they ought to have considered before all things, for that it is prior in knowledge and nature, they have thought to be last in the order of knowledge, and things which are called the objects of the senses they have believed to be prior to all things. Hence it has come to pass that,

while they considered the things of nature, they paid no attention to divine nature, and then when at last they directed their attention to divine nature they could have no regard for their first fabrications with which they overlaid their knowledge of natural things, inasmuch as these things give no help to the knowledge of divine nature. No wonder, then, that they contradicted themselves here and there. But I will pass this by . . .

(Vloten 80 / Boyle 44-5; Eliot's underlines and vertical bars)

[Eliot's note to the underlines:] "with regard to / their creation / ---- / their  
"being"

[Eliot's note next to the double bar:] The true order / of knowledge is / the  
reverse of that commonly assumed

The first note seems purely linguistic, i.e., just to check the English translation for a couple of difficult Latin expressions – it is, in passing, one of the stronger evidences, with the quotation marks, to show that Eliot had the Boyle translation by his side. Eliot, in other words, is not really interested in the reassertion of the fundamental ontological thesis ("God is the only cause of all things both of their essence and of their existence") at the beginning of the scholium, but instead in the methodological observation in the latter part – i.e., a sort of epistemological critique of the "commonly assumed" order of knowledge, which is, needless to say, also recapitulation of an argument in the Appendix to Part I, fully discussed in Chapter Two. However, the ensuing marginalia will clearly show that Eliot cares less about the "true order of knowledge", but that he is specifically interested in what is critiqued here as the "reverse" order, i.e., beginning not with God but with "things which are called the objects of the senses [the common people] have believed to be prior to things".

The next proposition (2p11) does, as discussed above, make a crucial statement as regards "the essence of the human mind". Interestingly, Eliot skips the proposition itself

and also what Gueroult calls “the first step” of demonstration (i.e., “The essence of the human mind is an idea”), but only shows interest in the less significant later steps:

*E* 2p11d. The essence of man (2p10c) is constituted by certain modes of attributes of God; that is (2a2), by certain modes of thinking, of all which (2a3) the idea is prior in nature, and this idea being granted the remaining modes (to wit, those to which the idea is prior in nature) must be in the same individual (2a4) . . . It must therefore be the idea of a thing actually existing. But not of a thing infinite. For an infinite thing (1p21 & 23) must always necessarily exist. But this (2a1) is absurd. Therefore the first part [*prium*] which constitutes the actual being of the human mind is the idea of an individual thing [*idea rei singularis*] actually existing. *Q.e.d.*

(Vloten 81 / Boyle 45-6; Eliot’s vertical bar)

[Eliot’s note:] Knowledge of / particular things / the simplest ele- / ment in human / thinking. / Acct. [Act? Account?] of / perception

It is quite significant and indeed symptomatic that Eliot here brings up “knowledge” and “perception”, both of which are simply irrelevant here, in that “the idea of X” in the above context is not at all “the idea that X has” (e.g., “knowledge” of “epistemological ideas” and “perception” of “psychological ideas” in Eliot’s context), but “*idea* of which X is *ideatum*”, or, to use Joachim’s expression, the “soul-side”<sup>214</sup> of X – one may likewise call it an *ontological idea*, in the sense that it is a mode of Substance under the Attribute of Thought and thus just as much a “thing [*res*]” as any mode under any other Attribute.<sup>215</sup> In this

<sup>214</sup> “Everything has a soul-side, or is a mode of the Attribute of Thought. Every body is an idea, and its ideal side is at once its ‘soul’ and the apprehension of its body. This general principle holds of man as of other things; his ‘soul’ or ‘mind’ is an idea or a mode of Thought, which at once is the ideal side of his body and *in some sense* apprehends the body, its ‘ideatum.’ Thus Spinoza’s conception of the mind rests upon his conception of the interrelation of the Attributes, which indeed he fully develops for the first time in the opening propositions of *E* 2.” (Joachim *Ethics* 125-6)

<sup>215</sup> Cf. “. . . ideas are just as much ‘things’ as some other affection of substance, whatever it may be. The proposition [*E* 2p7] thus signifies that everything that is included in an attribute, that is, any form

respect, the above passage that Eliot has marked off may be paraphrased as follows: the *ideatum* of the *idea* that the human mind is (or, to put simply, the “body-side” of man) is, first of all [*prium*], an actually existing, singular thing, which is later to be identified as nothing but the human body in *E* 2p13. So the seemingly insignificant modification of several words from “the first part which constitutes the actual being of the human mind” to “the simplest element in human thinking” does, in fact, effect an almost entirely contradictory mis/reading on Eliot’s part: in the former, “the human mind” is a mode of Substance, whereas, in the latter, “human thinking” is an agent of knowledge and perception; in the former, the actual existence of *ideatum* is a necessary condition for that of *idea* (2p8c) and the *ideatum*’s singularity secures the *idea*’s singularity and status as a mode, whereas “particular things” in the latter are nothing but the “simplest” objects of the human act of thinking. In other words, the latter – Eliot’s mis/reading of *E* 2p11d – only amounts, at most, to a rather vulgar “materialist” point of view, and is indeed that which has just been critiqued in the previous scholium, that is to say, Eliot here ought to be counted, ironical as it may, among those who “have not observed the order of philosophical argument” by believing “things which are called the objects of the senses . . . to be prior to all things” (2p10s).

From the former, on the other hand, it immediately follows (2p11c) that “the human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God”. Then, naturally, the question concerning the act of perception by the human mind must necessarily and ultimately be considered from God’s perspective, i.e., *as referred to* God’s Infinite Intellect:

*E* 2p11c. Hence it follows that the human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God, and thus when we say that the human mind perceives this or that, we say nothing else than that God, not in so far as he is infinite, but in so far as he is explained through the

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of being, whatever it is, is identical to that which is included in all the other attributes, exactly in the same manner that it is identical to itself” (Macherey *Hegel* 106).

nature of the human mind, or in so far as he constitutes the essence of the human mind, has this or that idea: and when we say that God has this or that idea not only in so far as he constitutes the nature of the human mind, but also in so far simultaneously with the human mind as he has also the idea of another thing, then we say that the human mind perceives the thing only in part or inadequately. (Vloten 81 / Boyle 48)

[Eliot's note:] In our perception / what we have is / God moving my / body. /  
When I perceive / a table there ex- / ists a perception / of a table in  
the / mind of God.  
Here is / apparently in- / dicated the dif- / ference between ideas /  
in God and out- [another?] / side of him

Eliot's note here is not very legible, nor is it easy to understand its relevance here. In fact, the immediately following scholium, which Eliot marks off by a vertical bar, makes a seemingly unnecessary but quite suggestive aside: "Here doubtless the readers will become confused and will recollect many things which will bring them to a standstill: and therefore I pray them to proceed gently with me and form no judgment concerning these things until they have read all" (2p11s). We should probably follow this suggestion and not tarry here too long, and yet, perhaps, it may be helpful to remember that the "perception of a table" is a pet metaphor used by Bertrand Russell in *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912), which is one of the major references in Eliot's dissertation. Russell, in a characteristically evocative, if not necessarily provocative, way, begins the book with a chapter named "Appearance and Reality", which his contemporary readers should no doubt have associated with the magnum opus of F. H. Bradley, Russell's nemesis. In this incipit chapter, however, Russell's target is Bishop Berkeley, as the quintessential "idealist", over the question of the existence of "matter" as opposed to "mind", or, more specifically, "Is there a real table?" According to Russell, Berkeley does admit that there is a real table, but denies that it can be "independent of seeing altogether, thought it must be independent



of *our* seeing. He is thus led to regard the ‘real’ table as an idea in the mind of God” (*Problems* 14). Russell finds the common denominator among the idealists since Berkeley in such an argument as to claim that the “real” table depends for its existence “upon being seen (or otherwise apprehended in sensation) by *some* mind – not necessarily the mind of God, but more often the whole collective mind of the universe” (*ibid.*), only to denounce it quite simply as “fallacious” in the next paragraph. Whether or not Eliot may actually have Russell in mind here, it is perhaps safe to say that Eliot reads the above passage not as that pertaining to the essence of the human mind as a mode of Substance (“part of the infinite intellect of God), but mis/reads sceptically as a typically idealistic invocation of “the mind of God” presiding over the act of perception.

The latter part of Eliot’s marginalia here is even less legible and intelligible. Whether the “difference” is between “ideas in God” and [ideas] “outside of him” or between “ideas in God” (*res cogitans*) and “another [body-]side of him” (*res extensa*) can hardly be determined. Besides, when Eliot writes, “Here is apparently indicated”, what this “Here” indicates is not quite certain: the immediately proceeding marginal note of his own or the latter part of *E* 2p11c? One thing that can be said here is, perhaps, that Eliot is, with his anti-idealist scepticism of “the mind of God”, “ideas in God”, or whatever pertains to God, driven to discover anything different from or outside of “God” as a kind of safe haven from the tyrannical Pure Immanence of Spinoza’s God. There is indeed a certain kind of ambiguity, if not rupture, in *E* 2p11c, which may lure a reader into sensing the “difference” of some sort – a kind of ambiguity caused by what Joachim calls “a double language” Spinoza employs:

Man and his apprehension are really modes of God. It is God who is and moves in all his modes; and somehow, in some sense, it is God who is perceiver and perceived. Hence Spinoza throughout employs a double language; he speaks, e.g., now of *man* as thinking, now of *God quâ constituting the human mind* as thinking, and the latter form of expression is the accurate one. For every idea

and every body, as modes of Thought and Extension, are states of God, and it is only by a necessary abstraction that they can be treated as independent things and made the subject of a judgement. (*Ethics* 127; Joachim's italics)

If one regarded, as Eliot apparently does, the independence of "man" as real, not as "a necessary abstraction", Spinoza's "double language" would become a "great difficulty" – "the latter form of expression" would no longer be "the accurate one", but a mumbo jumbo to exorcise, as Eliot apparently believes that the theory of knowledge and perception must begin with the "human thinking" as an active, independent agent, even as a Substance,<sup>216</sup> not with God. In this respect, it is surely impossible for Eliot to follow *E* 2p11c up to its conclusion: "we say that the human mind perceives the thing only in part or inadequately".

Here we are naturally led back to Eliot's "first difficulty": "The great difficulty of Spinoza: how an idea outside of God can be adequate". It is indeed possible that this "first difficulty" primarily refers to *E* 2p11c, especially as this corollary leads to the important conclusion, just quoted, that "the human mind perceives the thing only in part or inadequately". Mascarenhas regards this closing passage as "a negative definition of adequacy" ("Consciousness" 103), and Della Rocca as "a sufficient condition for inadequacy" (*Representation* 54). As we have fully discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter, the question of "adequacy" is deeply rooted in the *ontological* status of Spinozian "*idea*". To paraphrase the latter part of *E* 2p11c in the terms we have employed in the above discussion, God produces, or expresses Himself in, the human mind as the *idea* of an actually existing, singular thing, together with "the idea of another [actually existing, singular] thing" distinct from the human mind concerned, so that they may enter into a "horizontal" interaction (*commercium*) with each other, which interaction includes, of

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<sup>216</sup> Cf. "Thus the independence, the personal being, which we attribute to any man, is never strictly real. If it were, it would imply that some one of God's thoughts could 'be' out of relation to its context – that God could throw himself completely into a single finite mode of his Attribute of Thought and into a single finite mode of his Attribute of Extension: and man would be Substance." (Joachim *Ethics* 129-130)

course, any “perception” or “knowledge” that the human mind has as an effect of another body or thing upon its own body. It then follows that, due to such external causality that any bodily perception involves, it is necessarily “inadequate”. Eliot, meanwhile, does not accept the ontological status of Spinozian *idea* (“the idea that we are” is a mode of Substance, i.e., “in God”), so that he may *imagine* “an idea outside of God”, by which Eliot possibly means certain types of ideas that go beyond the Mind-Body “parallelism,” such as the “logical idea” (discussed above) and “science” (to be discussed presently). In addition, since he cannot distinguish “the idea that we are” (in God, hence *adequate*) from “the ideas that we have” (in the human mind, hence *inadequate*), such as “perception” and “knowledge”, he can ignore the “negative definition of adequacy” of *E* 2p11c and instead claim that there be an adequate idea that is not *referred* to God.

Without regard to the ontological question concerning “*God quâ constituting the human mind* as thinking”, Eliot follows the rest not as a “deduction of the essence of the human mind”, but examines it as a technical theory of human perception, based on the Mind-Body “parallelism”. Eliot’s marginalia thus becomes clearer and denser:

*E* 2p12. Whatever happens in the object of the idea constituting the human mind must be perceived by the human mind, or the idea of that thing must necessarily be found in the human mind: that is, if the object of the idea constituting the human mind be the body, nothing can happen in that body which is not perceived by the mind. (Vloten 81-82 / Boyle 46)

[Eliot’s note:] If the object of / an idea be a body, nothing / can take place in the body without / being perceived by the idea. / Otherwise it would not be the object of the idea.

Here, again, Eliot confuses the “idea that we are” with “ideas that we have”. The “idea constituting the human mind” is the “idea that we are (in God)”, or the “soul-side” of

“man”, while its “object” is its *ideatum*, or the “body-side” of the same “man”, and their relation is, as discussed above, “non-representational”, i.e., involving no such causal relation as perception. Hence, the *idea* here does not “perceive” anything, but is only *affected* as its *ideatum* is by external bodies (*E* 2p16).

*E* 2p13. The object of the idea [Objectum ideae ] constituting the human mind is the body [Corpus], or a certain mode of extension actually existing and nothing else.

(Vloten 82 / Boyle 47; Eliot’s markings)

[Eliot’s note to “ideae”:] used singular always

[Eliot’s note to “Corpus”:] literally, / our own body

[Eliot’s note:] What I perceive is / my body as related to / external objects.

Finally, the *ideatum* of the *idea* that the human mind is, which has so far only been defined as a “singular thing actually existing”, is now identified as the body and nothing else. It is rather interesting that Eliot, perhaps unawares, seems to intuit the singularity of *idea*, whose critical importance, however, Eliot does not develop any further. Instead, he identifies “*corpus*” with “our” body and immediately with “my” body that “I perceive”, so that he replaces the radical *singular-universal* moment of the *idea/ideatum* ontological unity in God by the subjectivist illusion of individuality.<sup>217</sup> In truth, Eliot seems to be trapped in the framework of the subjectivist and/or representationalist Mind-Body “parallelism”, in that he apparently understands that the human mind (“I”) perceives (or represents) the human body (“my body”), whereas the “non-representational” scheme dictates that the

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<sup>217</sup> In fact, Spinoza, quite controversially, makes sure in the ensuing scholium that the *idea-ideatum* unity (i.e., soul and body) is not an exclusive human property but is applicable to *things* in general: ““For those things which we have so far propounded have been altogether general, and have not appertained more to man than to the other individual things which are all, though in various grades, animate (*animata*)” (2p13s; Eliot’s underline). See also Joachim’s *The Nature of Truth*, pp.61-2 (footnote).

(human) mind should only perceive that which *happens* in the (human) body (cf. 2p14d) – in other words, “I” do not perceive “my body” *per se* (only God does, i.e., the *idea* that I am), but only the *effect* the “external objects” have on “my body” (i.e., ideas that I have), namely, *affections* by those objects (cf. “*ideae affectionum Corporis*” below).

A critical difference between these two schemes of “parallelism” would, I submit, be found in the way in which the final three words of *E* 2p13 (“and nothing else [*et nihil aliud*]”) should be interpreted. In the “non-representational” scheme, those three words pertain to the ontological unity of Mind and Body, hence no hierarchy between them; whereas, in the representationist scheme, “and nothing else” simply means “off limits” to the Mind’s imperialistic desire to represent an ever wider space than the Body. Hence, Eliot’s discontent with Spinoza:

*E* 2p13d. Now if the body is not the object of the human mind, the ideas of the modifications of the body [*ideae affectionum Corporis*] would not be in God (2p9c) in so far as he constitutes our mind or the mind of some other thing, that is (2p11c), the ideas of the modifications of the body would not be in our mind. But (2a4) we have ideas of the modifications of the body. Therefore the object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body, and that (2p11) actually existing. Further, if there were still another object of the mind besides the body, then since (1p36) nothing can exist from which some effect does not follow, therefore (2p11) necessarily there would be found in our mind an idea [of] the effect of that object. But (2a5) no idea of this is found. Therefore the object of our mind is the existing body and nothing else. *Q.e.d.* (Vloten 82 / Boyle 47)

[Eliot’s note:] Spinoza wd. never / agree that the / idea in our mind / ever has for its ob- / ject anything but / the body / It is for this / reason that sense / perception will / be condemned.

Sense perception, a kind of ideas<sup>218</sup> that we have in our mind, is, in a sense, “condemned” to be *inadequate*, simply because it is God’s perception “not in so far as he is infinite, but . . . in so far as he constitutes the essence of the human mind” (2p12c); and yet, it is certainly not “condemned”, in Eliot’s sense, to the prison-house of the Body, whose walls the Mind may one day overcome by virtue of its representing power. In a sense, Eliot condemns himself to the imaginary prison-house he himself has created, so as to break it by his own power:

*E* 2p13c. Hence it follows that man consists of mind and body, and that the human body exists according as we feel it.

(Vloten 82 / Boyle 47)

[Eliot’s note in the bottom margin of p.82:] My idea and my / body are identical / in essence. / Now every time I / know an object that / relation is identical / with the psychological re- / lation of my mind + body. / Epistemological and / psychological relations / are the same. / Solipsistic: we know only our / own bodies. But in science / we know more than / our own bodies.

So far, Eliot’s confusion of the terms is obvious: Firstly, confusion of “the idea that we are” with “ideas that we have” leads him to mistake the ontological unity of *idea* and *corpus* (See discussion of the “ontological parallelism” below) for the “epistemological” identity of “my idea” and “my body” (i.e., I can only know my body); secondly, since Eliot has only “ideas that we have” in mind while he does not comprehend the “wider meaning” of Spinoza’s “*idea*”, he illegitimately divides it into “knowledge” and “perception”, attributing (apparently, but not always coherently) to the former such terms as “epistemological” and “my idea” and to the latter “psychological” and “my mind”. The second confusion is, in

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<sup>218</sup> Cf. Wolfson points out “a wider meaning” that the term “*idea*” assumes with Spinoza, namely, “not only in the sense of *forma intelligibilis* [as with Descartes and the Scholastics], but also in the sense of *forma imaginabilis* and *forma sensibilis*” (*Spinoza* II, 47).

fact, caused by Eliot's antipathy towards confusion (e.g., that of "logical" and "mental", as discussed above), or what I have earlier called Eliot's "mixture-phobia". In that respect, the consequence here is quite ironical: by first separating what is in fact not confused and then finding a forced identity of what he himself has separated, Eliot comes to the erroneous conclusion that Spinoza confuses the "epistemological parallelism" (Knowledge and Body) and the "psychological parallelism" (Perception and Body), so that, from Eliot's perspective, not only (mental) perception but also (universalizable) knowledge is "condemned" to the prison-house of "my body", hence his marginal comment: "Solipsistic". Here, we ought to take special note of the fact that "solipsism" is the topic of the penultimate chapter of his doctoral dissertation and so, virtually, the climax of his "academic philosophizing", while the same issue is reflected almost everywhere in his early poetry, most ostensibly in the lines 411-414 of *The Waste Land* ("I have heard the key / Turn in the door once and turn once only / We think of the key, each in his prison / Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison" (CP 79)), in the note to which Eliot misleadingly quotes Bradley as if Bradley's theory of the "finite centre" authorized a solipsistic interpretation of the poem.<sup>219</sup>

Eliot is thereby discontent with such a "philosophical" consequence of the "epistemological + psychological parallelism" – though, in fact, it is a consequence that Eliot's own mis/reading has forced *his* Spinoza into reaching. Eliot's answer to the issue of "solipsism" is, then, "science" as a type of universal knowledge that goes beyond the prison-house of "my body". He goes on writing in the top margin of the recto:

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<sup>219</sup> Brooker successfully rebuts the "mistaken reading" by most literary critics (notably, J Hillis Miller's *Poets of Reality*) with regard to the Bradley quotation in the *Waste Land* notes, which is usually misread "as an authorization for a solipsistic interpretation of the poem" but "actually has nothing to do with solipsism, a fact that will be clear enough when its technical terminology is clarified" (Brooker *Mastery* 193-194). Although I fully agree with Brooker that the common assumption as regards Eliot's inherent solipsism is "a serious mistake", I would rather argue that solipsism is not a problem Eliot has overcome, but remains unsolved as "la grosse difficulté" in his Theory, so as to appear as disrupting and often misleading *symptoms* in his texts.

[Eliot's note in the top margin of p.83:] If you formed / an idea of more than / the human body: as in / science. This means then that / our idea is more than a human / idea. / Insofar as we do this our ideas are / more than finite. Then it is not we / but god who has the idea + we are / assimilated to God.

Spinoza, as we will discuss later, produces the theory of “common notions” as the way to form “adequate ideas” (the Second Kind of Knowledge). Spinoza's method requires, as it were, an “epistemological break” (in the Althusserian sense) with the imaginary relations in which we imprison ourselves, e.g., Eliot's imaginary prison-house of “my body”. In order to let this “break” occur, all we need to do is to rid ourselves of inadequate ideas, so that we may distill “common notions” or “adequate ideas” that are always-already present everywhere (i.e., immanent), in so far as we are part of God or Nature (i.e., in so far as we participate in God's Power or, with regard to the Power of Thinking, the *idea* that we are is *referred to* God's Infinite Intellect). Eliot's imaginary prison break, on the other hand, is a desperate attempt to overcome “my” finitude and reach infinitude that is imagined to be *outside*. It is of utmost significance that Eliot, rather despondently, predicts that the end result of such prison breaking be “assimilation” to God, or surrender to the arch-nemesis of his philosophizing. We will come back, towards the climax of our whole discussion of “Reading T. S. Eliot Reading Spinoza”, to this categorical difference between “reference” and “assimilation”, but for now let us finish our analysis of the most densely annotated *E* 2p10-2p13, by looking at Eliot's final marginalia before he falls into a glaring 5-page silence over the lemmata and (new) axioms that follow *E* 2p13. Here is his final comment on the closing passage of *E* 2p13s, which prefaces the ensuing lemmata and axioms concerning the laws governing the bodily motion (and rest), by stressing the importance of “know[ing] the nature of [the] object [of the human mind], as we say, that is the human body”:



*E* 2p13s. . . . This, however, I will say in general, that according as a body is more apt than others for performing many actions at the same time, or receiving many actions performed at the same time, so is the mind more apt than others for perceiving many things at the same time: and according as the actions of a body depend more solely on itself, and according as fewer other bodies concur with its action, so the mind is more apt for distinct understanding. And thus we may recognise how one mind is superior to all others, and likewise see the cause why we have only a very confused knowledge of our body, and many other things which I shall deduce from these. Wherefore I have thought it worth while to explain and prove more accurately these statements, for which purpose I must premise a few statements concerning the nature of bodies.

(Vloten 83 / Boyle 47-48; Eliot's underline and vertical bar)

[Eliot's note:] If one idea is / more adequate / than another, it / w.not be by greater / wealth in the body of wh. it is the idea. / One idea is better / than another by / its greater con- / tent.

It is perhaps needless to repeat that the human perception of its own body or external bodies is necessarily inadequate, and Eliot's confusion of "adequate" with "apt [*aptus*]" here is utterly fatal, in that "*aptus*" is "an ability to be affected [that] corresponds to the essence of the existing mode as a degree of power (*conatus*)" (Deleuze *Practical* 99), which primarily concerns the bodily *affections* and is thus to be the central issue of Part III and IV of the *Ethics* (in which Eliot shows little interest); whereas "adequacy" pertains to the "degree of truth", which is a purely "ideal" matter, i.e., measured on the purely immanent plane of the Attribute of Thought, *really* distinct from that of Extension. Moreover, if it amounts to the question of "better" (or worse), it is simply gross misunderstanding, and yet we should probably stop fixating on those simple misunderstandings any more. Instead, what seems of great interest here is that Eliot brings up the issue of "content" of an idea, apparently out

of context. Its context may likely be found, I submit, in the discussion of “ideal content” in his dissertation:

In being an idea at all, it must mean to be real: it is no more mental than the reality to which it is attached; its ideality consists in its meaning, and cannot be considered as a quality or mark by which it may be distinguished from the real. . . . This is rather what idealists are accustomed to call ‘ideal content’. Content is as equivocal a word as any, but I cannot see that any distinction is introduced by using ‘ideal content’ instead of idea. The idea predicated of reality is not part of any ‘content’ nor is it composed of simpler ideas. It is meaningless, I think, to speak of the ‘content’ of the idea: is the content anything but the idea itself? for so far as the content is discrepant with the idea, I cannot see that it is the content of *that* idea. (KE 42)

In the footnote to this passage, Eliot quotes from Bosanquet’s *Logic*: “I . . . shall follow Mr Bradley in using ‘idea’ for a fixed content or logical meaning, not for the psychical images which pass through the mind and never recur . . .” – and this brings us back to our discussion in the previous section as well as leads us directly to the following sections. So, for now, let us just confirm that Eliot, after all, boils down his reading of these important propositions running up to E 2p13 – which Antonio Negri proclaims “[t]he highest point of the first stage of the *Ethics*”, where “[c]orporeality . . . is foundational” (*Savage* 73, 65) – to his own philosophizing over “ideas”, categorically different from Spinoza’s “*idea*”.

### **“Does not this point in the direction of modern idealism?”**

At the beginning of the penultimate chapter (Ch. 6 “Solipsism”) of his doctoral dissertation, Eliot writes: “Solipsism has been one of the dramatic properties of most philosophical entertainers. Yet we cannot discard it without recognizing that it rests upon

a truth” (*KE* 141). In some sense, his whole philosophical project – perhaps his early poetical project as well – is to overcome, by not discarding, the “truth” of solipsism. Eliot’s ambivalence is, in fact, already apparent at the very beginning of the same dissertation with regard to “immediate experience”, noticeable in such a twisted rhetoric as the following: “Experience alone is real, but everything can be experienced. And although immediate experience is the foundation and the goal of our knowing, yet no experience is only immediate” (*KE* 18) – such an ambivalent statement is, in a sense, typical of a student struggling to break free of the spell of idealism. And yet, what is peculiar is that Eliot reads this project into his reading of Spinoza, especially in his particular way of understanding the Mind-Body “parallelism” as “epistemological + psychological parallelism”, where Negri, for instance, finds the moment in which “[t]he entire thematic of idealistic rationalism, characteristic of Counter-Reformational thought, is denied” (*Savage* 65). Body, which Negri finds “foundational”, is, for Eliot, nothing but the prison-house of Mind, from which, it seems, he attempts to set Idea (purified of any “mental” residues) free. In either case, the “parallelism” is understood only in the specific case of Mind and Body, so it seems necessary to briefly examine how Eliot reads the general doctrine of “parallelism” (i.e., the “parallelism” of the Attribute of Thought with every other Attribute), classically explicated by *E* 2p7.

In a sense, the opening pages of Part II of the *Ethics* may be said to converge on this doctrine of “parallelism”, although Spinoza himself has never used this term.<sup>220</sup> In fact, it is possible to point out a sort of parallel movements between the incipient propositions of Part I and Part II. As discussed in the previous chapter, Part I carefully establishes, through *E* 1p1 – 1p10, that “God or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists” (*E* 1p11) and that “infinite

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<sup>220</sup> According to Sato, the term “parallelism” is never used in Spinoza’s entire oeuvre, but Leibniz uses the phrase, “la doctrine du *parallélisme* de l’âme et du corps”, in *Considérations sur la doctrine d’un Esprit Universel Unique* (Sato 81; fn. 1).

things in infinite modes (that is, all things which can fall under the heading of infinite intellect) must necessarily follow from the necessity of divine nature” (*E* 1p16), so that it may then move on to demonstrations of finite modes’ “ontological dependence” on God or Substance, hence their eternity through their essences (which Eliot regards as “damage” on individuality of particular beings). Likewise, Part II initially attempts, before its focalization on the alleged main subject (i.e., the human mind<sup>221</sup>), to establish God’s Infinite Intellect (or *infinita idea Dei*<sup>222</sup>) as correlative to the ontological status of God or Substance in Part I, so that it may be demonstrated that, just as “God is the efficient cause of all things” (*E* 1p16c1), so does the “formal being of ideas” acknowledge “God as its cause only in so far only as he is considered as a thinking thing [i.e., God’s Infinite Intellect]” (*E* 2p5). The convergent point is, then, Proposition 7, especially its Corollary and Scholium:

- E* 2p7. The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.
- E* 2p7d. This is clear from 1a4. For the idea of everything that is caused depends on the knowledge of the cause of which it is an effect.
- E* 2p7c. Hence it follows that God’s power of thinking is equal to his actual power of acting: that is, whatever follows formally [i.e., objectively in the modern sense<sup>223</sup>] from the infinite nature of God, follows also invariably objectively [i.e., subjectively in the modern sense] from the idea of God in the same order and connection.
- E* 2p7s. Before we proceed any further, let us call to mind what we have

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<sup>221</sup> Read the Preface to Part II, which indeed proclaims that it shall follow *E* 1p16 only by focalizing on the human mind: “I now pass on to explain such things as must follow from the essence of God or of a being eternal and infinite: not all of them indeed (for they must follow in infinite number and in infinite modes, as we have shown in *E* 1p16), but only such as can lead us by the hand (so to speak) to the knowledge of the human mind and its consummate blessedness” (Vloten 72 / Boyle 37).

<sup>222</sup> Cf. “The expression *idea Dei* we take to be equivalent of the expression *intellectus absolute infinitus* as a description of the immediate infinite mode of thought. These two expressions, however, indicate two different aspects of that immediate infinite mode.” (Wolfson *Spinoza* 239)

<sup>223</sup> The phrase is Wolfson’s (*Spinoza* Vol. 2, 21).

already shown above: that whatever can be perceived by infinite intellect as constituting the essence of substance, invariably appertains to one substance alone; and consequently thinking substance and extended substance are one and the same thing [*res*], which is now comprehended through this and now through that attribute. Thus also a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, but expressed in two manners . . . And thus whether we consider nature under the attribute of extension or under the attribute of thought or under any other attribute, we shall find one and the same order and one and the same connection of causes: that is, the same things follow in either case. . . . as long as things are considered as modes of thought we must explain by the mere attribute of thought the order and connection of causes of all nature; and in so far as things are considered as modes of extension, the order also of the whole of nature must be explained through the mere attribute of extension; and I understand the same of other things. Wherefore of things as they are in themselves, God is in truth the cause, forasmuch as he consists of infinite attributes; nor can I explain this more clearly at present.

(Vloten 76-7 / Boyle 41-2; Eliot's underlines)

[Eliot's note (drawing a line from "ab infinito intellectu"):] Does not / this point in the / direction of modern / idealism?

It goes without saying that this is the *locus classicus* of the so-called "parallelism", which should be understood, *pace* Schopenhauer,<sup>224</sup> as non-representational, in that an *idea*, as a mode of the relatively autonomous Attribute of Thought, does not "represent" anything (i.e., any mode under a different Attribute) as its cause or effect, but simply "expresses" its own cause (i.e., another *idea*) on the immanent ("objective", or ideal) plane, that is to say, the causal concatenation (the "order and connection") of ideas functions autonomously and immanently under the Attribute of Thought alone. And this "order and connection" of

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<sup>224</sup> See Schopenhauer's "Sketch of a History of the Doctrine of the Ideal and the Real" (*Parerga* 3-28), esp. 8-13.

ideas is, according to the above Proposition 7, *somehow* “one and the same” as the “order and connection” of things – hence, “parallelism”.

“[God’s<sup>225</sup>] Infinite Intellect”, to which Eliot gives special attention here, first appears in the pivotal *E* 1p16,<sup>226</sup> and is mentioned several times before *E* 2p7s (e.g., *E* 2p4d, whose proposition Eliot marks off by a vertical bar). So, naturally, the question, “Why here?” should be raised. Nor is it easy to answer why the question excited by this specific phrase (“ab infinito intellectu”) here is “Does not this point in the direction of modern idealism?” Are these questions, as is naturally inferred, connected to the so-called “parallelism” – or not at all?

It is not unusual to praise or censure Spinoza for his alleged tendency towards idealism.<sup>227</sup> In the English-speaking academia, Sir Frederick Pollock, in one of the earliest and most authoritative full-fledged studies of Spinoza (1880), has famously discussed “Spinoza’s implicit idealism” or, more precisely, “the implicit idealism of Spinoza’s theory of the Attributes” (174-5, 178), whose argument Ernst Cassirer also cites in his magnum opus, *Das Erkenntnisproblem* (II, 121). But what is “modern idealism” in Eliot’s marginal question? One notable use of this expression at that time is G. E. Moore’s celebrated controversial essay, “The Refutation of Idealism” (1903), which opens fire with the following sentence: “Modern Idealism, if it asserts any general conclusion about the universe at all, asserts that it is *spiritual*” (28). Joachim, citing this essay at length, complains: “Even if Mr. Moore really had reduced all Idealism to Subjective Idealism, his ‘refutation’ is far from convincing”. Joachim even caricaturizes Moore by alluding to a “naïve” reader, who falsely accuses Spinoza of “idealism”: “When Spinoza maintained that ‘omnia, quamvis diversis gradibus, animata tamen sunt’ [‘the other individual things [than

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<sup>225</sup> In Letter 66, Spinoza uses “*infinitus Dei intellectus*” with regard to *E* 2p7s.

<sup>226</sup> Margaret Wilson points out the importance of *E* 1p16’s “explicit introduction (for the first time in the *Ethics*) of the concept of ‘infinite intellect’,” which concept “will play an absolutely fundamental role when Spinoza comes to articulate his theory of human knowledge in Part 2” (“Knowledge” 93).

<sup>227</sup> Cf. Robert N. Beck, “Some Idealistic Themes in the *Ethics*”, especially its supplementary “Bibliographical Essay on the Idealist Interpretation” (86-7).

man] are all, though in various grades, animate [have souls<sup>228</sup>]’ (*E* 2p13s)], some critics were naïve enough to protest that a stone or a lamp or a chair surely had no soul” (*Nature* 61-2; fn. 1). Apparently, Joachim wants “Modern Idealism” – *their own* Idealism (i.e., the tradition of Edward Caird, T. H. Green, and F. H. Bradley), whose “common affiliation” was “not to Berkeley but to Plato, Kant, and Hegel” (Mander *British* 5) – to jettison “Subjective Idealism”, and such an attitude of Joachim’s was no doubt shared by many of his contemporaries who were more or less sympathetic with various trends of Objective or Absolute Idealism – most of Eliot’s teachers at Harvard included.<sup>229</sup> It is perhaps fair to surmise that, by asking the above question (“Does not this point in the direction of modern idealism?”), Eliot bears in mind the contemporary trend of Absolute Idealism as that which goes beyond Subjective Idealism.

It is in this context that Pollock’s classic account can be read – or, at least, should have been read by Eliot and his contemporaries. After introducing the oft-discussed Correspondences 63-66 [65-68 in Pollock], in which Tschirnhaus [and Schuller] questions the infinity of Attributes, specifically with regard to the very scholium above (*E* 2p7s), whose doubts “Spinoza found himself, indeed, unable to resolve” (171), Pollock explains how its logical consequence ought to be idealistic:

Spinoza seems to say that every Mode of every Attribute other than Thought has a several mind or modification of thought to itself. Even the *intellectus absolute infinitus* appears to be manifold, so that each infinite mode of thought is appropriated to one Attribute only, and they are infinite in number. The result is

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<sup>228</sup> Cf. “The word here translated by ‘animate’ (*animata*) is simply an adjectival form of the Latin word for soul (*anima*), so it would be reasonable to read this as saying that , in the same sense in which man has a soul, all things have a soul” (Curley *Behind* 71).

<sup>229</sup> For example, Goerge Plimpton Adams, whose lectures on “Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz” Eliot attended during Spring 1911 at Harvard, is also critical of “Subjective idealism, of the Berkeleyan type”, and writes: “Now the Platonic Idea has its legitimate and well-attested descendents throughout the whole development of European philosophy, and perhaps it is still worth while trying to save the name ‘idealism’ for such as these, and to use the perfectly good term ‘subjectivism’ for the other thing” (*Idealism* 109, 116).

that the modes of Thought are numerically equal to the modes of all the other Attributes together; in other words, Thought, instead of being co-equal with the infinity of other Attributes, is infinitely infinite, and has a pre-eminence which is nowhere explicitly accorded to it. But if we go back to the definition we find that this pre-eminence has all the while been implied. For Attribute is ‘*that which understanding [intellectus] perceives concerning substance*’ as constituting the essence thereof.’ [1def4] Thus the ground is cut from under the apparent equality of the Attributes; and, though the system escapes the snares of subjective idealism, it does not escape idealism altogether. (172-3; Pollock’s italics)

Pollock here draws on the ensuing Correspondence 70, in which Tschirnhaus, through Schuller, questions the way in which “the Attribute Thought is made much more extensive than the other attributes” (*Correspondence* 338). To this question, Spinoza does not really answer [72], which has, in a sense, led to all the controversies over the “parallelism”, i.e., over interpretation of *E* 2p7s.<sup>230</sup> Let us here add again Joachim’s technical exposition of the same issue, which must certainly have helped Eliot understand it:

Thus the Attribute of Thought on its formal side is coextensive with Substance in the same sense as every other Attribute. But since, as thought, it necessarily has a content – or is the ‘esse obiectivum’ of its ‘ideata’ – it is, in a sense, ‘wider’ than any other Attribute: in fact, coextensive with *all* the [infinite] Attributes of God.  
(*Ethics* 72)

Although Joachim later points out “the abuse of a spatial metaphor” in this criticism (136), he none the less admits that “it is true that the thought-side of things is the ‘objective being’ of the modes of Substance under *all* the Attributes”, so that *either* the human mind must apprehend its “ideatum” in *all* the Attributes (hence, there are infinitely many “worlds”) *or*

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<sup>230</sup> Sato, making an insightful analysis of the exchange between Spinoza and Tschirnhaus, concludes that the whole problem lies in the fact that all the interpreters have ever since started with the problem posited by Tschirnhaus, which is, in fact, no problem at all (*Individual* 67-86).



the “order and connection” of thoughts must correspond to not only the Attribute of Extension but to *all* the Attributes (hence, the “completeness” of the Attribute of Thought is “more full” than any other) (137) – the former possibility is foreclosed by *E* 2p7s (“one and the same thing”), but the latter remains open to various possible interpretations.

It is, in short, the “pre-eminence” of the Attribute of Thought, which is “multi-dimensional to infinity” as opposed to any other “one-dimensional” attribute (Harris “Infinity” 10) and is like “a common exponent [*ein gemeinsamer Exponent*] that we indispensably need for conception of any being” (Cassirer II, 121; my translation), that matters, and, no matter how the Spinozian “parallelism” may be interpreted, the issue lies fundamentally in the “objective” nature of *idea*, or a mode of Thought, in addition to its “formal” nature like any other mode – with the infinity of Attributes as a backdrop. In this sense, it may be fair to conclude that Eliot has, following the orthodox tradition since Tschirnhaus, found problematic the pre-eminence of the Attribute of Thought, notably implied in *E* 2p7s, and seen in it the seeds of Absolute Idealism. There are, however, several doubts as to such a conclusion. Why has Eliot singled out “[God’s] Infinite Intellect”? In fact, when *E* 2p7s is brought up as the *locus classicus* of the “parallelism”, it is normally the other two passages underlined by Eliot that are at issue, namely, the “parallelism” and substantial identity of the Attributes of Thought and Extension (“... one and the same thing”) and its infinite multiplication (“... or under any other attribute ...”) – in a sense, had Eliot not drawn a line from “ab infinito intellectu”, it would be much easier to come to the above conclusion. Besides, as mentioned above, this term singled out by Eliot here has been used several times before this particular place. It should then be natural to presume that it is neither “parallelism” *per se* nor “[God’s] Infinite Intellect” *per se*, but the particular conjuncture of these two, that matters to Eliot. It must also be remembered that Eliot makes a rather twisted use of the technical term (“epistemological + psychological parallelism”) in a wholly different context, quite out of place, so that it may even be possible that Eliot has, to begin with, approached to *E* 2p7s from a point of view

quite other than that we normally assume with regard to the so-called “parallelism”.

Here it seems necessary, albeit at the risk of confusing our argument, to refer to another use of the phrase “modern idealism” by Eliot in a different context around the same time. In the concluding paragraph of “The Development of Leibniz’ Monadism” (*Monist*, 26 (Oct. 1916)), written shortly after he finished his doctoral dissertation, Eliot makes an additional passing comment, in much the same way as the above marginalia, on Leibniz “open[ing] the way for modern idealism”:

The monad is a reincarnation of the form which is the formal cause of Aristotle. But it is also more and less. The outstanding difference is that [Leibniz] sets out from an investigation of *physical* force, and his monads tend to become atomic centres of force, particular existences. Hence a tendency to psychologism, to maintain that ideas always find their home in particular minds, that they have a psychological as well as a logical existence. Leibniz on this side opened the way for modern idealism. To his anticipations of modern logic of a school opposed to absolute idealism, it is unnecessary for me to point. (KE 197)

Whether or not Eliot distinguishes “modern idealism” from “absolute idealism” here is not quite clear, but the reason why he brings up “modern idealism” can be positively established from his letter to Bertrand Russell, dated June 7<sup>th</sup> 1916<sup>231</sup>: “Thanks awfully for the books – the second lot arrived today. They will come in most usefully, and I shall be extremely grateful for them. Jourdain [British editor of *The Monist* and the *International Journal of Ethics*] wants another article on Leibniz first – monads again – by July 15, so I

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<sup>231</sup> Several weeks later, Eliot received a letter from Prof. Woods of Harvard Philosophy, who urges Eliot to return to Harvard to pursue a career in philosophy: “The Division of Philosophy has accepted your thesis without the least hesitation. Prof. Royce regards it as the work of an expert. Prof. Hoernlé has written a criticism which I will send you later. Meantime we will keep the MS. here. I hope that we can arrange some time which will make it more convenient for you to take the rest of the examination. In any case, please let us be reassured that your interest in Philosophy is as strong as before” (LI 156). That was a time when Eliot was still to choose between two possibilities – Professor of Philosophy at Harvard or an avant-garde poet in London.

shall have to shelve the idealists for a time” (LI 155). The names of those “idealists” Eliot was then working on but had to “shelve” for a while are found in another letter, this time to his teacher at Harvard, J. H. Woods, dated Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> 1916: “[Jourdain] will have two articles, I believe, in the October *Monist* – the Leibniz number – one on Leibniz and Bradley, the other on Leibniz and Aristotle. He wants me to do a series on English idealists of the last generation (Green, Caird etc.), but I fear it will progress very slowly, as I have so little time” (LI 167). This project on “English idealists of the last generation” proves abortive, as Eliot is soon to abandon “academic philosophizing” all together as well as his Ph.D degree. But its critical edge is no doubt reflected in the above passage in the Leibniz essay as well as in his dissertation on Bradley – and, most likely, in the marginalia in Spinoza’s *Opera* as well. What is at stake is “a tendency to psychologism, to maintain that ideas always find their home in particular minds, that they have a psychological as well as a logical existence”. The persistence of Eliot’s critique of “idealism” – whether modern or absolute, Leibniz or Spinoza – is more than obvious: Eliot seems to find everywhere, almost obsessively, the confusion (or the ambiguous “relation”) of psychological “ideas” and logical “ideas” – it shouldn’t be irrelevant here to recall what I have called “Eliot’s mixture-phobic intellectual(ist) criterion” in Chapter Two. Indeed, Eliot’s anti-psychologist urge to purify Logic of anything mental<sup>232</sup> – just as in his celebrated “impersonal theory” of poetry – is paramount, and, in that respect, it may be possible to find a certain parallel, taken out of context, between the note to *E* 2p7s (“Does not this point in the direction of modern idealism?”) and the two other marginal questions discussed in the previous section (“But what is the relation of an idea and its meaning?” and “epistemological + psychological parallelism: What is their relation?”), in that they all share a critique on the same footing of what Eliot regards as the ambiguity or adulteration of the word “idea”.

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<sup>232</sup> Cf. “There is, in this sense, nothing mental, and there is certainly no such thing as consciousness if consciousness is to be an object or something independent of the objects which it has” (KE 83).

## “Cogito ergo sum?”

It remains, after all, a matter of conjecture why Eliot has singled out, for his questioning Spinoza’s “idealism”, “[God’s] Infinite Intellect” in the famous “parallelism” scholium. One possible, if forced, explanation would be that Eliot, while agreeing on the identity of the relatively autonomous series of the Attributes of Thought and Extension (“epistemological + psychological parallelism”) as a way of dislodging the cause of the problematic ambiguity or adulteration of “ideas”, cannot accept, as a “relative materialist”, the way in which “[God’s] Infinite Intellect” is invoked, like *dues ex machina*, as the ultimate guarantor of such identity, thus introducing another unnecessary, merely confusing category of “idea” (i.e., *idea Dei*) – if so, Eliot here has possibly in mind Royce’s “Unity of the Infinite Thought” or Caird’s “ultimate unity of knowing and being . . . in the idea of God”.<sup>233</sup> In any case, any further speculation over this particular marginalia does not seem to amount to much. It should, however, be rather interesting to find instead several passages reminiscent of the “parallelism” in Eliot’s doctoral dissertation, especially Chapter Three (“The Psychologist’s Treatment of Knowledge”), which is nothing but a wholesale assault on the psychological approaches in philosophy. Taking up the conclusion of the previous chapter, which has deconstructed “the Distinction of ‘Real’ and ‘Ideal’”, Eliot opens this chapter with a rather dramatic proclamation: “ultimately the world is completely real or completely ideal, and ideality and reality turn out to be the same” (*KE* 57). And, in the course of individual criticisms, this identity (non-distinction) of ideality and reality is applied to that of “mental content” and external reality, so that the very subject-matter of psychology may be nullified:

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<sup>233</sup> Royce, *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (1885): “All reality must be present to the Unity of the Infinite Thought” (433; Royce’s italics); Caird, *Spinoza* (1888): “All philosophy must rest on the presupposition of the ultimate unity of knowing and being. . . All philosophy, moreover, which is not atheistic, must find that ultimate unity in the idea of God” (309).

We meet, however[,] with definitions which make no distinction between mental and non-mental. Thus Miss Wodehouse's ([*The Presentation of Reality* (1910)] p. 13) content is as objective as object; psychology does not expand the contents of the object but limits them 'because it is interested in their shape' (p. 20). This is an important, and radically different, definition, of the subject-matter of psychology; the external world and the mental world are of exactly the same stuff, and are *ultimately identical, but as experienced are both fragments*.

(KE 74; Eliot's italics)

While Eliot's argument to that effect reminds us of his later formulation of the "objective correlative",<sup>234</sup> this line of argument leads, at the end of this chapter, Eliot to go as far as to make such a "radical"<sup>235</sup> claim: "There is, in this sense, nothing mental, and there is certainly no such thing as consciousness if consciousness is to be an object or something independent of the objects which it has" (KE 83). Likewise, the ensuing two chapters (both entitled "The Epistemologist's Theory of Knowledge") question the very subject-matter of epistemology (or "the object of knowledge") in the deconstructive manner: "For from this point of view the problem of knowledge does not exist; the distinction between inner and outer, which makes the epistemologist's capital, cannot stand" (KE 138).

At least on the face of it, Eliot's words ("the external world and the mental world are of exactly the same stuff, and are *ultimately identical, but as experienced are both fragments*") seem to correspond to Spinoza's in *E 2p7s* ("consequently thinking substance and extended substance are one and the same thing, which is now comprehended through this and now through that attribute"). And yet, I am far from suggesting that Eliot's

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<sup>234</sup> "[T]he emotion is really part of the object, and is ultimately just as objective. Hence when the object, or complex of objects, is recalled, the pleasure is recalled in the same way, and is naturally recalled on the object side rather than on the subject side" (KE 80).

<sup>235</sup> Richard Wollheim, who, as the authority on Bradley's philosophy, reads Eliot's dissertation, comments on this passage: "Eliot's final position on the nature of the mind is radical: and he expresses his position with unaccustomed clarity" (*Art* 235).

“deconstructive” critique, prevalent all through his dissertation, may have been inspired by Spinoza’s “parallelism”. On the contrary, I submit, what is of great significance in this apparent similarity, which I would call the “identity-in-parallelism” scheme, is the absolute difference of their approaches to philosophy. On the one hand, the “identity-in-parallelism” scheme for Spinoza is ultimately *ontological*. Let us here follow Deleuze’s ingenious explication of three formulations of Spinozian “parallelism” (*Expressionism* 104-111; *Practical* 86-91). The first formulation is an “identity of order” or *correspondence between modes of different attributes (isomorphism)*, which excludes any relation of real causality between the mutually irreducible, really distinct attributes and between their modes (hence, the “non-representational” nature of *ideas*). The second is an “identity of connection” or *equality of principle (isonomy)*, which refuses any analogy, any eminence, any kind of superiority of one series over another [e.g., *idea* over *ideatum*; Mind over Body], and any ideal action that presupposes a pre-eminence (hence, the “snares” of idealism are sidestepped). And the third formulation is an “identity of being” or *ontological unity (isology)*: the modes of different attributes have not only the same order and the same connection, but the same being, i.e., one and the same modification, differing only in attribute (hence, no worry about infinitely many “worlds”). Through this third formulation of ontological unity, finally:

Spinoza refuses the intervention of a transcendent God to make each term in one series agree with a term in the other, or even to set the series in agreement through their unequal principles. Spinoza’s doctrine is rightly named “parallelism,” but this because it excludes any analogy, any eminence, any transcendence. Parallelism, strictly speaking, is to be understood neither from the viewpoint of occasional causes, nor from the viewpoint of ideal causality, but only from the viewpoint of an immanent God and immanent causality. (*Expressionism* 109)

And Deleuze finds the transition “from epistemological [the Attribute of Thought vs. every

other Attribute] to ontological parallelism [every one vs. every other]” in *E* 2p7s, more specifically in the simple generalization, or *multiplication*, towards the end of this scholium, “I understand the same concerning the other attributes”. This transition has, as briefly discussed above, caused Tchirnhaus to point out the possibility of infinitely many “worlds” [i.e., one Substance but infinitely many modifications], but, according to Deleuze, it is indeed “the complex status of the idea of God or the infinite intellect” (*Practical* 89) that guarantees the necessary *ontological unity*. In other words, Deleuze unearths the radical doctrine of “ontological parallelism” precisely where Eliot sniffs out “the direction of modern idealism”.

Eliot, on the other hand, seems to appeal to the “identity-in-parallelism” scheme in order simply to critique, by *deconstructing* their very subject-matters, the psychologist’s treatment of knowledge as well as the epistemologist’s theory of knowledge – here is cast a shadow of the marginalia: “epistemological + psychological parallelism” – without regard to “ontological unity” or any kind of foundation. With regard to such an approach of Eliot’s, his own analysis of the dissertation project in his letter to Norbert Wiener (Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1915) is again quite illuminating:

However, I took a piece of fairly technical philosophy for my thesis, and my relativism made me see so many sides to questions that I became hopelessly involved, and wrote a thesis perfectly unintelligible to anyone but myself; and so I wished to rewrite it. It’s about Bradley’s theory of judgment, and I think the second version will be entirely destructive. I shall attack first ‘Reality’ second ‘Idea’ or ideal content, and then try to show sufficient reason for attempting to get along without any theory of judgment whatsoever. In other words, there are many objects in the world (I say many, as if one could draw a sharp line, though in point of fact it is degree everywhere) which can be handled as things sufficiently for ordinary purposes, but not *exactly* enough to be subject matter for a science – no definition of judgment, that is, is formally either right or wrong; and it simply is a waste of time to define judgment at all. (*LI* 89; Eliot’s italics)

Eliot's "relativism" is, indeed, "entirely destructive" and methodically so. He "attack[s] first 'Reality' second 'Idea,'" not in order to establish the non-representational and equal-principled "relative autonomy" of each attribute so as to arrive at *ontological unity*, but merely to "deconstruct" the distinction of the "real" and the "ideal" so as to annihilate the theory of judgment (hence, the foundation of Logic, or any *scientia*) all together. Indeed, Eliot's "deconstructive" approach to philosophy is "formal", not only in the sense that Eliot himself describes the "formal" meaninglessness in the above quotation, but also in the sense that Spivak, reflecting on Derrida's "turn", contrasted the earlier tendency towards "formalization" with the later "setting-to-work" mode of deconstruction:

Aporias are distinguished from logical categories such as dilemmas or paradoxes; as experience is from presupposition. Aporias are known in the experience of being passed through, although they are non-passages; they are thus disclosed in effacement, thus experience of the impossible. Formalization is achieved by passing through or "solving" aporias, treating them as practical logical problems. In the second phase of deconstruction, then, formalizations can therefore be seen as a halfway house toward the open end of a "setting to work". (*Critique* 427)

In a sense, Eliot's "academic philosophizing" may be characterized as the above-described first "formalization" phase of deconstruction<sup>236</sup> – passing through the "experience of the impossible" by means of reading Spinoza without God. Is there any "turn" in Eliot's

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<sup>236</sup> At this juncture, Walter Benn Michaels' seminal essay, "Philosophy in Kinkanja: Eliot's Pragmatism" (1981) is as insightful as it is revealing. Michaels, rebutting the stereotypical view of Eliot as an idealist of the Bradleyan brand, classifies Eliot as a pragmatist: "In response to these readings [that 'regard Eliot as a fairly straightforward idealist'], it is tempting simply to quote Eliot's own remark, 'the "immediately given" is the bag of gold at the end of the rainbow,' and certainly one of the most important forms Eliot's pragmatism takes is in its critique of the notion of ground. 'In the growth and construction of the world we live in, there is no one stage, and no one aspect, which you can take as the foundation' (*KE* 151)" ("Kinkanja" 174). This insightful analysis with apt quotations is essentially akin to our argument as to Eliot's reading Spinoza *without* God. It is also revealing that Michaels later associates Eliot's anti-foundational "denial" with Derridian deconstruction ("Kinkanja" 182-3), which we should properly call the "formalization" phase in Spivak's terms.



(anti-)philosophy towards the open end of a “setting to work”? Where does the possibility, or potentiality, lie for Eliot to face the “experience of the impossible”?

Spivak adds: “Literature – more specifically, poetry – remains a figure that provides an experience of the impossible” (428). I am here tempted to quote again Eliot’s dramatic pronouncement in the same letter to Wiener – just before the above-quoted passage: “I am quite ready to admit that the lesson of relativism is: to avoid philosophy and devote oneself to either *real* art or *real* science” (LI 88; Eliot’s italics).

Let us once again return to the question of the “privileges” of the Attribute of Thought. As we have seen, one significant aspect of such privileges, derived from the doctrine of the so-called “parallelism” that posits the *formal-objective* pair for each of the infinite Attributes, is the “multi-dimensional” nature of the Attribute of Thought as “a common exponent” for all the Attributes – hence, it is “wider” than any other Attribute. There is another, no less significant aspect, namely, the doctrine of “*idea ideae*”, or “*idea mentis*”. Let us first cite Joachim’s authentic exposition of “*idea ideae*”, which Eliot should no doubt have shared. First of all, Joachim defines, after the manner of Bradley’s *Logic*,<sup>237</sup> the idea in terms of judgment:

Every idea is an act of thought, and as such involves assertion or denial: i.e. is a judgement. There are no ‘faculties’ of any kind. . . . There is, therefore, no faculty of assertion or denial: no ‘voluntas’ in the Cartesian sense of the term. And the particular assertions and denials are nothing different from the particular acts of thought. For an ‘idea’ is not a picture ‘in’ the mind, which we may then

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<sup>237</sup> Cf. “Judgment proper is the act which refers an ideal content (recognized as such) to a reality beyond the act. This sounds perhaps much harder than it is. The ideal content is the logical idea, the meaning as just defined. It is recognized as such, when we know that, by itself, it is not a fact but a wandering adjective. In the act of assertion we transfer this adjective to, and unite it with, a real substantive. And we perceive at the same time, that the relation thus set up is neither made by the act, nor merely holds within it or by right of it, but is real both independent of and beyond it.” (Bradley *Logic* 10).

go on to affirm or deny, or again content ourselves merely to gaze on. An idea is an act of thought, and the act of assertion or denial is inseparable from the content asserted or denied. 'Idea' means the assertion or denial of a content, or a content *quâ* asserted or denied. (*Ethics* 132)

According to Joachim's Bradleyan reading of Spinoza, an *idea* is an "act of thought" (i.e., judgment = proposition in logic), not a "picture 'in' the mind" (i.e., a mental image), an echo of whose reading we may easily find in Eliot's dissertation,<sup>238</sup> although his marginalia in Spinoza's *Opera* seems to suggest the opposite. It may also be of certain interest to cite Macherey's explication, as it is essentially akin to Joachim's while updating it in the Althuesserian terms:

For Spinoza, ideas are not images, passive representations, and they do not reproduce (more or less correctly) realities that would be exterior to them, or at least it is not this that constitutes them as true. This is what he explains in a striking formula, which evidently critiques Descartes: they are not "mute paintings on a canvass," allusive fictions of a reality or a model that would persist outside them, which they could at most resemble. Ideas, all ideas, are acts, that is, they always affirm something in themselves, according to a modality that returns to their cause, that is, in the last instance the substance that expresses itself in them in the form of one of their attributes, thought. The soul is a spiritual automaton because it is not subjugated to the free will of a subject whose autonomy would be to all extents and purposes fictive . . . (*Hegel* 63; translation modified)

In other words, an *idea* is active-affirmative, operating on the immanent (relatively

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<sup>238</sup> Note here that Eliot's concluding remark at the end of Chapter II of his dissertation ("On the Distinction of 'Real' and 'Ideal'"), through which he finds the ambiguity of the word "idea" in every philosopher he deals with and purifies its meaning, is as follows: "The idea is, as idea, Act; and how far Act can be made an object, together with its relation to content, presentation, and object (*Inhalt, Vorstellung, Gegenstand*) will form the subject of the ensuing chapter" (*KE* 56). Although Eliot adds a footnote, "Should I apologize for the fact that my use of 'idea' does not correspond with that of any author with whom I am acquainted?" (*ibid.*), his use of "idea" does, to a considerable degree, correspond with Joachim's Bradleyan reading of Spinoza's "*idea*".

autonomous) plane of the Attribute of Thought (hence, its “non-representational” nature), while being determined in the last instance by Substance as the absent cause (i.e., “reference to God”), not by the “fictive” subject, Cartesian or otherwise, with imaginary *voluntas*, or free will. Such autonomous dynamism of non-representational “ideas” (of which the human mind is one) does, in turn, involve a certain kind of self-reflexivity by way of “*idea ideae*” (or “*idea mentis*” – an idea of the [human] mind). Joachim thus goes on to explain:

But an asserted content is itself a something, an event, a mode with an *esse formale*, which has an ‘objective’ side of its being – is (or may become) the content of another thought. In God – in the completeness of the Attribute of Thought – there must be an idea of every idea. Everything is, on one side of itself, an object of thought, the content of a thought of God, and to this principle the modes of Thought itself form no exception. Hence there must be an idea of the idea which constitutes the human mind: and so far as the latter idea has an independent existence, the idea of which it is the object [i.e., *idea mentis*] has a similar independent existence. (132-3)

Since everything that exists *formally* has an idea that corresponds to it *objectively* (hence, the “pre-eminence” of the Attribute of Thought, discussed above), an idea (e.g., the human mind as an idea of its body), seen on its *formal* side, becomes an *object* of another idea (i.e., *idea mentis*). Joachim then re-examines this mechanism “from a different point of view”:

The assertion of a content is an act of thought, and thought by its very nature is reduplicated *in infinitum* on itself. We cannot ‘have an idea’ without knowing that we have it, and knowing that we know that we have it, and so on *in infinitum*. If we imagined an idea as a something, a picture e.g., present in our mind at which we gaze, we might suppose ourselves to ‘have an idea’ without knowing that we have it. But an idea is the very act of thinking: and the character, which distinguishes Thought from all the Attributes, is its awareness of itself and its

awareness of that awareness *in infinitum*. The human mind, therefore, just because it is an idea, is also the idea of that idea. (133)

Joachim carefully calls this awareness “the *form* of self-consciousness” (134; Joachim’s italics). No other attribute is endowed with such self-reflexivity, which may thus be regarded as a privilege enjoyed by the Attribute of Thought and its modes, *ideas*, including the human minds.

With these expositions in mind, let us now turn to Eliot’s marginalia to *E* 2p21:

*E* 2p21. This idea of the mind [*Hæc Mentis idea*] is united to the mind in the same manner as the mind is united to the body.

[Eliot’s note:] *idea mentis* = / self-conscious

*E* 2p21d. That the mind is united to the body we have shown from the fact that the body is the object of the mind (2p12 & 13); and therefore by that same reason the idea of the mind is united to its object, that is the mind itself, in the same manner as the mind is united to the body, *Q.e.d.*

*E* 2p21s. This proposition can be understood far more easily from what has been said in *E* 2p7s. For there we showed that the idea of the body and the body itself, that is (2p13) the mind and the body, are one and the same individual, which is conceived now under the attribute of thought, and now under the attribute of extension. Wherefore [*quare*] the idea of the mind and the mind itself are one and the same thing and are conceived under one and the same attribute, namely, thought. The idea of the mind, I repeat, and the mind itself follow from the same necessity in God and from the same power of thinking. For in truth the idea of the mind, that is the idea of an idea, is nothing else than the form (*forma*) of an idea in so far as it is considered as a mode of thinking without

relation to its object: thus if a man knows anything, by that very fact he knows he knows it, and at the same time knows that he knows it, and so on to infinity. But of this more again. |

(Vloten 93 / Boyle 57-8; Eliot's underlines and vertical bar)

[Eliot's note to "Wherefore the idea of the mind . . .":] Cogito / ergo sum?

[Eliot's note to "But of this more again":] prop. 43. / scholium

Just as "thinking substance and extended substance are one and the same thing" (E 2p7s), "the idea of the mind and the mind itself are one and the same thing" (E 2p21s) – both underlined by Eliot. The difference is that the former is what we have above called "the identity-in-parallelism" between the two autonomous Attributes of Thought and Extension, whereas the latter is a "unity" under the same Attribute of Thought, hence it entails the infinite, purely immanent self-reflexivity without regard to any other attribute. At first sight, Eliot, by regarding the idea of the mind [*idea mentis*] as "self-conscious", appears to follow Joachim's reading faithfully. However, there is, I maintain, an absolutely *critical* difference between Eliot's "self-conscious" *idea mentis*, which he soon connects with Cartesian "Cogito", and what Joachim describes as "the *form* of self-consciousness" – the difference so *critical* as to require our most careful attention.

The critical issue involved in the conception of "*idea ideae*" or "*idea mentis*" is, as Joachim rightly problematizes in the section "Some Difficulties", that of the "self" and its "unity" – or the "identity-in-parallelism". Joachim writes that Spinoza's intention here "can hardly be doubtful": "He intended to restore that unity and continuity in all our thinking, which his conception of the mind as a complex of 'ideae' seems to have destroyed" (*Ethics* 140). But, according to Joachim, this is a "failed" project:

Without some unity, without some 'self,' Spinoza's theory of conduct and of knowledge could not advance a step: and it does not seem erroneous to suppose

that Spinoza intended to find such a unity in the ‘idea ideae’ – the consciousness of our thinking which every act of thinking involves. But if this was his intention, it must be confessed that he has failed. (141)

One key reason for the doomed failure lies in the fact that the mind is “a complex”, or “an aggregate”, of many “ideae”, just as the body, its *ideatum*, is a complex of “the simplest bodies [*corpora simplicissima*]”. The dynamic constitution of complex bodies and the general principles governing bodily motion and rest are the subject of the lemmata and (new) axioms that follow *E* 2p13,<sup>239</sup> which leads to the isomorphic complexity of the mind, described in *E* 2p15 (“The idea which constitutes the formal being of the human mind [i.e., the idea of the body] is not simple, but composed of many ideas”). It is, as briefly mentioned above, symptomatic enough that Eliot skips those lemmata and axioms all together – those 5 pages without any underline or marginalia are utterly glaring and all the more so because the immediately preceding pages (2p11-13) are the most densely annotated of all. “[I]n any case,” says Joachim, the human mind “is a complex of ‘ideae idearum’ and not a single ‘idea ideae,’” so that “[s]o far as for our experience we are ‘one’ – possessed of a continuous consciousness of an individual self – that experience to some degree is illusory” (*Ethics* 141). The long footnote Joachim adds here summarizes his argument on this “difficulty” thoroughly:

Spinoza’s atomistic explanation of the body and mind – if we take it as anything more than a provisional theory – seems to render all unity of man’s consciousness impossible (not merely to leave it unexplained, but to cut away all possibility of its

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<sup>239</sup> Cf. “An individual is thus always composed of an infinity of extensive parts, insofar as they pertain to a singular essence of mode, under a characteristic relation (*E* 2, after p13). These parts (*corpora simplicissima*) are not themselves individuals; there is no essence of each one, they are defined solely by their exterior determinism, and they always exist as infinities; but they always constitute an existing individual to the extent that an infinity of them enters into this or that relation characterizing this or that essence of mode; they constitute the infinitely varied modal material of existence.” (Deleuze *Practical* 77)

being), and his theory of 'idea ideae' cannot restore such unity. But in that theory he evidently assumes that man is *in some sense* 'one', has a 'self', and his atomistic doctrines are avowedly provisional only . . . The difficulty may be put thus: from a complete point of view, there is no individual save God; from the provisional atomistic point of view, there is no 'individual' (except in a loose sense) but the elementary corpuscles and their 'ideae.' Yet the individuality of man is neither one nor the other, and is (and must be) taken by Spinoza as in some sense a fact. The doctrine of 'idea ideae' cannot justify this 'fact,' cannot bring it into consistent coherence either with Spinoza's Atomism or with his metaphysical theory. Yet if this is *not* its object, what place has it in the system? (142)

Let us here recall our argument towards the end of Chapter Three with regard to the "molar" and "molecular" points of view. We have there argued, with the help of Deleuze's later seminar concerning the death of an "individual" and the "very precise type of eternity", that the very dissolution of such a molar entity as "Self" is indeed the basis for the "participation" of molecular modes (*res singulares*, or, quite aptly in the above quotation, "the elementary corpuscles and their 'ideae'") in God's power (the Singular-Universal Axis). To such a "molecular" point of view does Joachim's "provisional atomistic point of view" exactly correspond, and the only difference – indeed the absolutely *critical* difference – is that Joachim finds the "difficulty" where Deleuze forces open the moment of a truly radical breakthrough – "parts and cogs of one another in the flow that feeds one and the same desiring-machine, so many local fires patiently kindled for a generalized explosion – the schiz and not the signifier" (*Anti-Oedipus* 137).

Here lies, it seems, the crux of Joachim's phrasing, "the *form* of self-consciousness". The scrupulous philosopher finds the "difficulty" with positing the "self" in Spinozian system, so that the "self-consciousness," logically entailed by the doctrine of *idea ideae*, cannot contain the identifiable content (or the "subject") but instead remains as a *form*. Were it not for the idealist (or "molar") presupposition that "[w]ithout some unity, without some 'self', Spinoza's theory of conduct and of knowledge could not advance a step", such

self-reflexivity could be attributed to the singular (or “molecular”) ideas and/or Universal (or “Virtual”) God, but Joachim cannot, all the more for his critical scrupulousness as an idealistic metaphysician, either evade or resolve the “difficulty” – one who claims to have solved it in the Absolute Idealist camp is, in passing, Josiah Royce with his “self-representative system”,<sup>240</sup> whose celebrated illustration of a perfect map of England that includes the map itself *ad infinitum* inspired Jorge Luis Borges as well as Nishida Kitarō (See Chapter Five). On the other hand, Eliot simply finds “self-conscious” in “*idea mentis*”, and *uncritically* (though with a question mark) connects it with Cartesian “Cogito”. If Joachim faces the *critical* moment as the “difficulty” but does not pursue it to the “outer limits of an idealism” (Macherey), Eliot does not read such a moment at all – blinded, I maintain, by his lack of the “molecular” (Singular-Universal) point of view, of which his bracketing of “God” and indifference to the dynamic aspect of “Spinoza’s Atomism” are indeed symptomatic. Eliot, in other words, lives in a world of *imaginatio*, of the “illusion” of Cartesian Cogito, from which all his uncritical “difficulties”, as opposed to Joachim’s *critical* one, seem to have sprung.

### **“How should I use them for your closer contact?”**

Nevertheless, it would be unfair to Eliot, if we simply ignored the question mark in “Cogito ergo sum?”, for Eliot is certainly the last person to accept “the metaphysical theory

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<sup>240</sup> See Royce’s “Supplementary Essay” to *The World and the Individual, First Series* (1899), which is, in fact, an attempt to contradict Bradley by “vindicating the concept of the actual Infinite against the charge of self-contradiction . . . [and] defending the concept of the Self against a like charge” (476). With Royce’s (early) obsession with Spinoza in mind, his seemingly quixotic charge at “the development of an Infinite Multitude out of the expression of a Single Purpose” (502) may well be worth considering in our context. Although his infinite series represented by “One Purpose” cannot be facilely compared to Deleuze’s nomadic distribution of “series” (Cf. *The Logic of Sense*), its serious consideration would likely be illuminating, not only for a “repressed” Spinozist influence on Eliot, but also for an unacknowledged one on Nishida. See the final section of this chapter for further discussion.



of the substantial unity of the soul”, as he describes the philosophical foundation of the celebrated “impersonal theory” of poetry in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919):

The point of view which I am struggling to attack is perhaps related to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul: for my meaning is, that the poet has, not a “personality” to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. (SW 56)

The celebrated “impersonal theory” of poetry is, it goes without saying, a poetic method of universalizing the particular – “the struggle . . . to transmute his personal and private agonies into something rich and strange, something universal and impersonal” (SE 137). Eliot’s native fear of Chaos (e.g., bodily passions or, later, democracy) and obsession with Order (e.g., intellect or, later, the Church) is perhaps a most fundamental cause of a rage for Theory as the method of universalizing the particular, but, philosophically speaking, Eliot is most likely to have been convinced of its authenticity through his intense reading of Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* under the tutelage of Joachim at Merton College, Oxford. In the penultimate paragraph of the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle summarizes his account of “scientific knowledge”:

When one of a number of logically indiscriminable particulars has made a stand, the earliest universal is present in the soul: for though the act of sense-perception is of the particular, its content is universal – is man, for example, not the man Callias. A fresh stand is made among these rudimentary universals, and the process does not cease until the indivisible concepts, the true universals, are established: e.g. such and such a species of animal is a step towards the genus animal, which by the same process is a step towards a further generalization.

(Bk. II, Ch. 19, 100a15-100b3; McKeon 185)

Such a “process” towards generalization by discriminating the particular and distilling the universal from it does indeed lie at the core of Eliot’s strategy, in philosophy as well as in poetics. In that respect, since Eliot’s serious readings of the *Posterior Analytics* and Spinoza’s *Ethics* were most likely simultaneous, and, besides, Spinoza’s conceptualization of the “Second Kind of Knowledge” is, according to Wolfson, attributable to this same book of Aristotle’s *Organon* (Wolfson *Spinoza*, esp. II 125-130), it is fair to say that Eliot’s reading of Spinoza, at least in terms of the theory of knowledge, is much influenced by the (Aristotelian) theoretical urge to universalize the particular. It seems then no accident that one of the most unequivocal and theoretical pronouncements of Eliot’s poetics contains a distinctly Aristotelian / Spinozistic echo:

the reader in the ignorance which we postulate is unable to distinguish the poetry from an emotional state aroused in himself by the poetry, a state which may be merely an indulgence of his own emotions. The poetry may be an accidental stimulus. The end of the enjoyment of poetry is a pure contemplation from which all the accidents of personal emotion are removed; thus we aim to see the object as it really is and find a meaning for the words of Arnold. And without a labour which is largely a labour of the intelligence, we are unable to attain that stage of vision *amor intellectualis Dei*. (“The Perfect Critic” (1920); *SW* 14-15)

In the following paragraph, Eliot even mentions “great writers such as Spinoza or Stendhal” as exemplary of the necessary “frigidity” of intellect.

However, such a rage for Theory is always dogged by ambivalence. Most famously, the “escape from emotion [and] personality” is immediately followed by a rather dogmatic (counter-)statement as to the powerful presence of the pre-theoretical particular: “But, *of course*, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things” (*SW* 58; my emphasis). As the pre-theoretical particular matters, so does the post-theoretical. Eliot’s major reservation as regards the above-quoted

Aristotelian formula is, in fact, found in a footnote – footnotes, like marginalia, may be called the inside/outside of the text – in one of his *Monist* papers, “The Development of Leibniz’ Monadism” (Oct. 1916), the very last product of his “academic philosophizing”, thus technically a “swan song” of Eliot the philosopher:

In *An.post.* Book II (Chap.XIX) 100a 15-17 we are told how the knowledge of the universals arises through experience of particulars. ‘First principles’ are arrived at by induction. What is not made clear is the status of the particulars after scientific knowledge is established. (*KE* 184; fn.)

Eliot is, in short, navigating between Scylla and Charybdis<sup>241</sup> – between a rage for Theory and a love of the particular, that is to say, his “intellectual” urge to achieve scientific and/or poetical knowledge of the universal by discriminating the particular is dogged by his almost fetishistic affection for the particular that is prior as well as posterior to Theory and/or Poetry.

Ambivalence at such a deep level – the virtual-intensive “double reading” – should,

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<sup>241</sup> Cf. “Aristotle and Plato, I am inclined to believe, owe their success in navigating between the particular and the universal, the concrete and the abstract, largely to the fact that ‘forms’, ‘species’, had to Greek mind not exactly the same meaning as for us. They were concrete without being particular” (“The Development of Leibniz’ Monadism”; *KE* 190; fn.3). Eliot’s concern with such “navigat[ion] between the particular and the universal” dates back, at least, to his graduate studies at Harvard. In one of his graduate papers, in fact, Eliot has doubted Aristotle’s “success” in that respect: “That Aristotle intended them [abstract and particular] to be the same I feel sure; that he succeede [*sic.*] in identifying them I am inclined to doubt. He fails[,] that is to say, to account for the existence of particulars: for it is not to either the form or the matter alone that their existence is due, though Aristotle appears to attribute it now to one and now to the other” (“On Matter”; TS Houghton). There is, in passing, a lecture by later Eliot, entitled “Scylla and Charybdis” (Feb. 1925), in which he speaks of “the philosophy of a poem”. Here again, we may hear the echo of Eliot’s early – indeed, life-long – problematic concerning the particular and the universal, now in terms of poetry (experience) and philosophy (theory): “When I speak of ‘the philosophy of a poem’, then, I have in mind primarily a poem by a poet who has pursued philosophic studies, and who has even elaborated philosophic theories of his own. These have played an important part in his formation, and will make their appearance in his poetry, but in a form in which they are no longer maintained as theories, but presented as something experienced, and go to compose, together with his experience of life of all other kinds, the material of his poem” (295-6).

we may expect, erupt at times on the surface of the text as symptoms. One significant case – significant indeed for our context – is the eruption of the “body”, found in one of the climatic moments of his doctoral dissertation, where he conclusively elaborates on his theory of knowledge – or, perhaps, we would rather call it an “anti-theory”, since it aims to deprive knowledge of its very subject and object. Read one of the “radical”<sup>242</sup> conclusions he has reached at the end of the thesis:

As to the problem of knowledge, we have found that it does not exist. Knowledge, that is to say, is not a relation, and cannot be explained by any analysis. We do not say, however, that in knowing the ‘mind’ comes into immediate and direct contact with the object, for we find that such an assertion has no great meaning, for there is no ‘mind’ for the object to be brought into contact with . . . I think that it is perhaps truer to say that the object is independent [of the knower than to say that it is dependent]. For *qua* known, the object is simply there, and has no relation to the knower whatever, and the knower, *qua* knower, is not a part of the world which he knows: he does not exist. (KE 154)

This passage amply shows the characteristics of Eliot’s “destructive” method – as we have discussed above in terms of what Spivak calls the “formalization” phase of deconstruction. Eliot deconstructs the binary of the subject and the object of knowledge and makes them altogether foundationless, hence no “relation”,<sup>243</sup> no “knowledge”, no “knower” – but then “perhaps” only “the object is simply there”.

And yet, Eliot does not pursue this “radical” viewpoint to its ultimate conclusion, which would, if he did, probably look like Nagarjuna’s philosophy of *sūnya* (vacuity, emptiness, or “absolute zero”<sup>244</sup>) or even that of his contemporary Wittgenstein.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Cf. Richard Wollheim’s view of Eliot’s dissertation, discussed above.

<sup>243</sup> Mark here that “relation” is a central analytical category for Eliot’s theory of knowledge and perception, which explains why Eliot is so much concerned with “relations” in the marginalia in Part II of the *Ethics*.

<sup>244</sup> The term “absolute zero” is Eliot’s to describe Bradley’s Absolute (KE 200), which certainly

Instead, Eliot immediately brings in a rather dubious viewpoint of “practical relations”. In the ensuing paragraph, while Eliot “[t]heoretically” confirms, rather like Joachim’s reading of “Spinoza’s atomistic explanation of the body and mind” above, that “the subject, the I, or the self, is no more consciously present than is the inter-cellular action” (*KE* 154), he soon ushers “our practical relations” in:

We perceive an object, we will say, and then perceive it in a special relation to our body. In our practical relations with objects we find it convenient and even essential to consider the object’s relation to ourself [*sic.*] as itself an object; in many cases this is what is important. This self may be primarily the body, but the body is in felt continuity with the spiritual self. (*KE* 155)

The line of argument here is vaguely reminiscent of Spinozian Body-Mind “parallelism” and mechanism of perception as “affections” upon the body, but it is full of reservation (“convenient and even essential”; “in many cases . . . important”; “may be primarily”; “felt continuity”). No sooner have we seen this abrupt intrusion of “our body” in the text, however, than Eliot turns back to a demystifying theory – but this time “*a sort of* theory of knowledge”: “*this sort of* knowing [in which the presence of the self is an important part]”, Eliot presumes, “induces us to think of knowing as a relation” (*ibid.*; my emphasis). Although he soon comes to an authentically constructionist conclusion to treat the self (the knowing subject) and its relation with the object (knowledge) as a mere “construction”, there now looms certain ambiguity, or an uncanny presence in absence of the “body” in the form of “ourself as itself an object”, which is “in felt continuity with the spiritual self”, in the following, general and somewhat dogmatic, pronouncement:

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carries Buddhist overtones.

<sup>245</sup> Cf. “[Nāgārjuna’s] *Mādhyamikakārikā* is a set of exercises intended to act as an antidote for the ontological urge. In the Indian tradition, one major model for philosophical enlightenment – the one to which Nāgārjuna adhered – is a systematic divestment of concepts, theories, and ideas, rather than a systematic accumulation of them; and it is because of their common mistrust for philosophical propositions that Nāgārjuna has often been compared to Wittgenstein” (Perl and Tuck 118).

There is a relation between the object and the self: a relation which is theoretical and not merely actual, in the sense that the self as a term capable of relation with other terms is a construction. And this self which is objectified and related is continuous and felt to be continuous with the self which is subject and not an element in that which is known. As it is metaphysics which has produced the self so it is epistemology, we may say, which has produced knowledge. (*ibid.*)

The conclusion is very “theoretical” – constructionist, pure and simple. But the preceding sentences seem to be quite symptomatic of Eliot’s ambivalence as regards such a “theoretical” conclusion. For instance, the “relation” between the object and the self is “theoretical and *not merely* actual” – which means that this “relation” is, with all its theoretical generalization, *to a certain extent* still “actual”, or “practical”, i.e., there are some pre-theoretical residues. Also, the “objectified and related” self (which “may be primarily the body” in the preceding passage) is “felt” to be continuous with the (“spiritual”?) self, or “subject”, which is presumably the “logical” or “extra-mental” subject – here is a shadow of “epistemological + psychological parallelism: what is their relation?”, but we cannot help asking the question: By whom, if *anybody*, and in what *practical* way is such a relation “felt”? It seems, in short, that the here-unnamed “body” disturbs Eliot’s demystifying / de-corporifying theory of knowledge, which aims to deconstruct the foundations of metaphysics, epistemology, or any-logy, while, at the same time, sharing with them “a sort of” Theory-*qua*-generalization, so that, by not accepting the “body” (the *singular* body rather than “my body”) as the ontological foundation for the theory of knowledge, Eliot’s ensuing argument inevitably becomes elusive: “in order to give any account of knowing we must bring in the terms which are related, and these terms are *only provisionally* definable”; “consciousness and its object are both *only evanescent* aspects in reality” – in the end, he cannot help relying on “a transcendence which has no end” (*KE* 156; my emphases), that is, the never-founded and never-ending “self-transcendence”, i.e., Eliot’s theory of a “point of view” that ought to be always-already transcended by another

*ad infinitum*, as discussed above. It is perhaps symptomatic of such repression of the “body” by the generalizing Theory, that Eliot abruptly invokes the “fine arts” in the middle of the above argument:

It is perhaps epistemology (though I offer this only as a suggestion, and to make clearer the sort of thing that I mean) that has given us the fine arts; for what was at first expression and behaviour may have developed under the complications of self-consciousness, as we became aware of ourselves as reacting aesthetically to the object. (KE 155)

Although this insertion certainly does not “make clearer” his ambiguous argument, it gives us an insight as to Eliot’s ambivalence: Eliot may indeed find in the corporeal and corporifying presence of “fine arts”, which *somehow* constructs and is constructed by “self-consciousness”, a way out of the limbo of his “destructive” philosophizing, which has theoretically denied and thus dispersed any foundation, such as “self” or “consciousness”, while he *himself* is an aspiring poet who seeks to construct *conscious*, not “romantic”, artifacts of his own. Here we might as well recall the words of Eliot, who calls himself the “relative materialist”, in his letter to Wiener: “In a sense, of course, all philosophising is a perversion of reality: for, in a sense, no philosophic theory makes any difference to practice”; “I am quite ready to admit that the lesson of relativism is: to avoid philosophy and devote oneself to either *real* art or *real* science” (LI 87, 88).

Such a dilemma between the universalizing tendencies of Theory and the obsession with the individuality or corporeality of the practical “self” lies, I submit, at the very heart of Eliot’s philosophy as well as poetics – or, if I may, of his *ethology* of reading. It may be called a dilemma of the “self” in “self-transcendence”, that is to say, while the “self” cannot be posited *in itself* but must always-already be “transcended” (or universalized) by Theory, one cannot speak of “self-transcendence” without positing some kind of (pre-theoretical) “self”, nor can one make believe that the (post-theoretical) “self” simply evaporates into air

after “self-transcendence”. And, in the face of this vicious circle, Eliot seems to retain, rather than discarding the “self” as a mere theoretical construction, a firm faith that there is another kind of “self”, or a certain part of the “self”, that is *outside* the theoretical limbo – e.g., “either *real* art or *real* science”. In fact, Eliot seems to have formed such a belief as early as the time when he was sitting in Josiah Royce’s seminar, in which he discussed his paper on “Classification of *Gegenstände höherer Ordnung*” with Royce (May 5, 1914) and, to conclude the discussion, he made an apparently out-of-context, rather dramatic final statement: “In my theory there is something outside – e.g. beauty is outside, and distressed world, etc.” (*Royce’s Seminar* 176).<sup>246</sup> The “self” in “self-transcendence” is trapped inside of the theoretical loop (or spiral, if one prefers to imagine an upward movement) on the Particular-General Axis but *somehow* stays, at the same time, outside, by virtue of visioning “the boredom, the horror, and the glory” beneath beauty and ugliness.<sup>247</sup> Gerontion’s despair is, indeed, a negative (i.e., “honest”) expression of such a dilemma:

I would meet you upon this honestly.  
 I that was near your heart was removed therefrom  
 To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.  
 I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it  
 Since what is kept must be adulterated?  
 I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:  
 How should I use them for your closer contact?  
 (“Gerontion” ll. 54-60; *CP* 41)

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<sup>246</sup> To this final comment by Eliot, Royce gives a characteristically enigmatic reply, “They really think they are tempted, but they really aren’t tempted.” The quotation marks in the shorthand report apparently suggests that it was a quotation. Although I cannot identify the source, I am tempted to call it Spinozistic.

<sup>247</sup> The “self” here, which is, in a sense, inside and outside at the same time, like footnotes or marginalia, may be called “*metoikos*”, an alien resident in ancient Greece. This term will play the key role in the following chapter. As for “the boredom, the horror, and the glory”, see the final paragraph of Chapter Two.



The “self”, with all its particularity (e.g., five senses), “was removed”, and its “passion” (or “*affectus*”, to use a Spinozian term) is useless to “keep”, since whatever left-over particulars “must be adulterated”. Such is the absolute despair of “an old man in a dry month . . . waiting for rain”, of the “self” in “self-transcendence”. If the despair is only relative – relative to “memory and desire”, or representation of absent objects (i.e., *imaginatio*) – then, indeed, particulars are “kept” only to “be adulterated”, that is to say, only to be represented by and thus assimilated to generality (the Particular-General Axis). And yet, if and if only it is absolute – absolute in the sense of “break” with the representationalist circuit (i.e., “adequate”) – then, *via negativa*,<sup>248</sup> and by asking rhetorical questions, the singular “self” may be visited, *somehow*, by “a flash of lightening”, blinding all particularities and/or generalities, and “Then a damp of gust / Bringing rain”. Why, then, should the “self” need to keep its singularity? Because the “self” should use it for a closer contact with the Universal – the Universal *sive* the Virtual, or *Deus sive Natura*.

### **“we are assimilated to God”**

Let us now return to Eliot’s marginalia concerning “my body” and “science”. Eliot’s imaginary prison-house of “my body” (“Solipsism”) and imaginary prison-breaking (“Science”) is, I believe, a typical case of his “rage for Theory” as the method of universalizing (i.e., “generalizing” in our terminology) the particular, and, as such, we may well expect there to be certain dynamism (textual or extra-textual) on the Particular-General Axis, involving a certain kind of symptoms of the above-discussed dilemma, which touches

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<sup>248</sup> Cf. “Descend lower, descend only / Into the world of perpetual solitude, / World not world, but that which is not world, / Internal darkness, deprivation / And destitution of all property, / Desiccation of the world of sense, / Evacuation of the world of fancy, / Inoperancy of the world of spirit; / This is the one way, and the other / Is the same, not in movement / But abstention from movement . . .” (“Burnt Norton” III; *CP* 193)

upon the very sensitive core of Eliot's *ethology* of reading. Let us first quote again Eliot's consecutive marginal comments at the bottom of p. 82 and at the top of p. 83:

My idea and my body are identical in essence. Now every time I know an object that relation is identical with the psychological relation of my mind + body. Epistemological and psychological relations are the same. Solipsistic: we know only our own bodies. But in science we know more than our own bodies.

If you formed an idea of more than the human body: as in science. This means then that our idea is more than a human idea. Insofar as we do this our ideas are more than finite. Then it is not we but god who has the idea + we are assimilated to God.

As we have discussed, Eliot seems to be trapped in the framework of the subjectivist and/or representationalist Mind-Body "parallelism", in that he apparently understands that the human mind ("I") perceives (or represents) the human body ("my body") "and nothing else" ("only"), hence "Solipsistic". In the "non-representational" scheme, on the other hand, the human mind ("the *idea* that we are") and the human body (its *ideatum*) are "one and the same" (i.e., the ontological unity), so that all and only the *affections* upon the body by external objects must be perceived by the mind (cf. *E* 2p12, 2p13d, 2p14d). In the former, "my body" is nothing but the limit to "my" representation, signifying "my" finitude as a knowing subject ("Cogito"); whereas, in the latter, the body (*Corpus*) is the very ground for perception and/or knowledge, where there is no knowing subject but only a dynamic system of relations between bodies and the correlative relations between ideas of affections of those bodies ("*ideae affectionum Corporis*"). In the latter "non-representational" scheme, the correlation (or "parallelism") between "my mind" and "my body" (more generally, the Attribute of Thought and every other attribute) is fundamentally and ultimately secured by their – or "its", as "my mind" and "my body" are, after all, ontologically united – *reference* to God; whereas Eliot's "science", from which "my" finitude is removed by means of

breaking the shackles (or “parallelism”) of “my body” on “my mind”, loses “my” individuality, only to fall into the trap of *assimilation* to God. Eliot has, as it were, begun *without* God and struggles to ward off (or “neglect *consciously*”) its shadows, which he regards as “damage” on individuality, as much as possible, only to end up, quite ironically, with *assimilation* to this arch-nemesis. Is it *wrong from the start*?

Spinoza’s “science” as the method of forming “adequate ideas” as *referred* to God *versus* Eliot’s “science” as the road, paved with scepticism of God’s Infinite Intellect and with faith in human intellect, to *assimilation* to God – no doubt, the meaning of “science” is wholly different one from the other, even though both are hugely indebted to Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* for understanding its meaning. Eliot would surely interpret this “science” as “transcendence” of the body-shackled perception of the particular by a more general “point of view”, and more *ad infinitum*. By contrast, Spinoza would find the body not only the ground for perception of the particular but also the ground for common grounds that are immanent. Joachim’s reading is faithful to Spinoza:

But now suppose that there is some character or property which is present in all bodies, and present equally in the whole and in each, and in every part of each, of them. A perception of a fragment of such a property is equivalent to a perception of the whole. Whether we perceive it in our own body or in external bodies, in one or more, in a fragment or in a whole, it is impossible to apprehend it except adequately. If we perceive it at all, we must perceive it in its true and complete nature. . . . Apprehend any portion of it, and you have apprehended the essential nature of it all. And your knowledge of it will be universal, without being abstract. For it is knowledge of what is present everywhere in the same character, and yet it is knowledge of a concrete singular affirmative being, not of an ‘ens rationis’ or ‘imaginationis’ constituted by arbitrary abstraction. (*Ethics* 172-3)

This “it” is what is called “common notions”, or the “Second Kind of Knowledge”, in the *Ethics*. “The contents of scientific knowledge are,” Joachim further explains, “the

‘communes notiones’, which express the common properties of things so far as these are present in an equal degree in every portion of everything” (174). In fact, Joachim even rebuts in advance Eliot’s complaints in the margins:

Further, suppose that a property is confined to our body and a closed system of external bodies, with which our body interacts. If this property is present in all the members of the system (and in our own body), and present equally in the whole and in each body and in every part of each – so far as we perceive it at all, we must perceive it adequately. (174)

One may wonder, “If only Eliot had read those pages of Joachim. . .” In fact, there is no doubt that he did.

Let us now look at the propositions explicating “common notions” (*E* 2p37-40):

- E* 2p37. That which is common to all (see *E* 2p13le2), and that which is equally in a part and in the whole, do not constitute the essence of an individual thing [*rei singularis*].
- E* 2p38. Those things which are common to all, and which are equally in a part and in the whole, can only be conceived as adequate.
- E* 2p39. That which is common to and a property of the human body, and certain external bodies by which the human body is used to be affected, and which is equally in the part and whole of these, has an adequate idea in the mind.
- E* 2p40. Whatever ideas follow in the mind from ideas which are adequate in the mind, are also adequate.

(Vloten 101-102 / Boyle 65-66)

[Eliot’s note to 2p37:] v. Joachim / p.176.

Eliot did indeed read Joachim’s explication of “Cognitio secundi generis, Ratio” (170-180),

which section has, in the top margin of each recto, a simplified section title, “SCIENCE”. So far everything seems clear and straightforward. What is rather unclear is why Eliot has singled out the least likely *E* 2p37, rather than the oft-cited *E* 2p38-40, and the specific page 176, rather than the clear exposition of “common notions” in the earlier part of the section, quoted above. Such is an almost idiosyncratic character of Eliot reading Spinoza, and here, I believe, lies a most significant symptom.

A most obvious reason why *E* 2p38-40 always attract the readers is that those three propositions all pertain to the necessary “adequacy” of “common notions”, which directly leads to the definition of the “Three Kinds of Knowledge” in *E* 2p40s2, in which the “Second Kind” or “*ratio*” is defined thus: “we have common notions and adequate ideas of the properties of things (2p38c, 2p39c, & 2p40)”. On the other hand, *E* 2p37, which Eliot has singled out, is a negative statement, rather like a disclaimer in advance, that “common notions” do *not* constitute the essence of a singular thing [*res singularis*]. Meanwhile, if one reads Joachim’s pp. 170-180, it is to be noticed that p.176 is where the above-quoted explication, as luminous as usual, of “common notions” turns to a critical insight into “the characteristic advance of science on imaginative experience, and its limits” (*Ethics* 176). From these initial observations alone, we may well surmise that Eliot, in fact, does (or can) *not* read “common notions” as that which is “common” and “adequate”, but instead as that which is *not* individual and *not* inadequate.

Let us then look at Joachim’s p.176 for a direct reference to *E* 2p37:

Science starts with ‘*notiones communes*’ – ultimately with the axioms based on the adequate knowledge of God’s complete and necessary nature which is involved in all men’s every perception – and its inferences move within this sphere. But the characters which such ‘*notiones communes*’ comprehend are equally present in all things which exhibit them, and therefore can be and be conceived apart from any particular one. Hence they ‘do not constitute the essence of any single thing’ [footnote: *E* 2p37; cf 2p10cs]. It follows, that

science comprehends Reality under the form of necessary interconnexions of content, and not as a complex or a system of particular things. The object of imaginative experience – the world of things, with its changes in time and place, its rich variety of individual colouring, its manifold life – becomes for science a timeless system of necessary laws. (*Ethics* 176)

As a prominent coherence theorist, Joachim reads “the characteristic advance of science on imaginative experience, and its limits”, in terms of “coherence”: “For scientific experience Reality exhibits that timeless necessary coherence, in which there are no coming-to-be or passing away, no contingency or possibility, no distinct or separable parts, no individual things” (*ibid.*). Science is “immeasurably superior”, because it “has no concern with the individualities of which they are the appearance” but, instead, it “comprehends the eternal order and coherence of the permanent omnipresent properties of the Real” – mark the Bradleyan phrasings here – and yet, according to Joachim, this superiority is, at the same time, “its limits”, for science “cannot give us an understanding of the intimate individuality of any thing” and its “analysis has allowed the breath of life escape from the world, and its reconstruction is powerless to restore it” (176-177). Joachim elaborates especially on the “limits” of Spinozian “common notions” in the following pages:

The ‘essence’ of our body and mind, as forming *this* single thing, cannot be constituted by the ‘common properties’ which are the Reality for science. It would seem, therefore, that scientific knowledge inevitably destroys its basis: for in the Reality of science there is no room for an individual body or mind. As we attain to scientific knowledge, ‘we’ (it would seem) must disappear: science can neither recognize nor justify the distinct being of the man of science. The ‘essentia’ of the body and of the mind of *this* man does not fall within the ken of scientific knowledge. (178-9)

The unspecified reference in this passage is obviously *E* 2p37, which Eliot singles out

despite a general ignorance of this proposition compared with the others concerning “common notions”. And, besides, that “scientific knowledge inevitably destroys its basis” is clearly homologous with the dilemma of the “self” in “self-transcendence”, discussed in the previous section. Although Joachim quickly adds that *scientia intuitiva*, or the Third Kind of Knowledge, “restor[es] the individuality from which ‘ratio’ of necessity abstracts” (179), Eliot’s reading of Spinoza literally stops short here, i.e., Part II of the *Ethics*, and only leaves very few casual markings in the rest. Eliot’s take on the issue of “common notions” is more than obvious: he is not concerned with – or “neglect[s] *consciously*” – the necessary “adequacy” of “common notions” (hence, *reference* to God’s Infinite Intellect), but solely with the loss of “the intimate individuality” or “the breath of life” – that is apparently why Eliot has found *E* 2p37 alone significant and also referred to “Joachim / p.176”. Indeed, this observation, it is now obvious, brings us back to “*la grosse difficulté de Spinoza*”, virtually all of the four “difficulties”.

After all, the concept of “common notions” that “do not constitute the essence of a singular thing” and that are ultimately “referred to God” is, for Eliot, nothing but a “great difficulty of Spinoza”. And yet, Eliot has to solve the problem of “solipsism”, which “has been one of the dramatic properties of most philosophical entertainers” (*KE* 141), in a way that does not lead to *assimilation* to God. In the penultimate chapter of his doctoral dissertation (Ch.VI Solipsism), Eliot introduces an unanticipated and unfounded argument, which is “essentialist”, as it were, and thus seems to contradict the “constructionist” (or “destructive”) critiques he has exercised earlier in the same thesis: “we are able to intend one world because our points of view are *essentially* akin” (*KE* 144; my emphasis).<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> It is of great interest with regard to the development of Eliot’s thought, that earlier in one of his graduate papers, he has dealt with the issue of solipsism in purely formal (or logical) terms: “Solipsism is self-contradiction, because if A is to know only his own world, there must be another world to contrast it with: and there is none. If A knew only his own world, he would have to know that he knew only his own world” (“On Objects”; MS Houghton). The development from such a negative critique of logical contradiction to a positive assumption of “essential kinship” may be paralleled with Eliot’s eventual affirmation, after Bradley’s similar development, of “faith” as a

Then, all of a sudden, Eliot invokes “one indifferent Nature” – totally out of the blue:

The selves, on the contrary, find themselves from the start in common dependence upon one indifferent Nature. Nature assumes, inevitably, a different aspect to each point of view; no two finite centres, we may say, apprehend the same Nature, yet each centre has pressed upon it the fact that from the one Nature it with all its neighbours sprang. To claim that this is inconsistent with the isolation of our monads is to confuse the genetic and the structural standpoints. My mind, that is, I must treat as both absolute and derived; absolute, in that it is a point of view which I cannot possibly escape (to which indeed I am bound so closely that the word escape is without meaning); derived, in that I am able, by virtue of the continuity of mind with the non-mental, to trace in some way its origin, with that of other minds, from an indifferent material. (*KE* 145)

We should here be entitled to surmise that this “one indifferent Nature” with a capital N, which abruptly intrudes Eliot’s text, comes from his reading of Spinoza, but still the logic of “common” is wholly incommensurable. While *E* 2p37 definitively posits that “common notions” do not constitute the essence of a singular thing, Eliot’s hypothesis of “common dependence upon one indifferent Nature” is based upon the individual beings’ “essential” kinship. Eliot’s argument is rather ambiguous – or confusing, to say the least – when he critiques the tendency to “confuse the genetic and the structural standpoint” and instead suggests one “must” treat “my mind” as “both absolute and derived”. Judging from the following sentence (“Biologically, we see minds in a common medium, and treating minds thus as objects, we conclude their content to be similar just as we find their physical structure and their environment similar”), it should be fair to understand that Eliot’s “structure” is, unlike our usage of the term today, what is specifically called “bio-structure” or “biological structure” (“minds as [physical] objects”), so that a “point of

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foundation of metaphysics (See footnote 255 below). It may also be of certain theoretical interest to investigate to what extent those developments are comparable to the two stages of Derridean deconstruction as described by Spivak.



view” is an “absolute” limits to the “world” that the “self” perceives. We may here draw comparison between this “structural” standpoint and Eliot’s mis/reading of Spinozian Mind-Body “parallelism”, discussed above, that is to say, a “point of view” as the “absolute” limits or boundaries from which “my mind” can never “escape” is indeed nothing but “my body”, understood in the way Eliot did in the marginalia of Part II of the *Ethics*. Eliot would never assent to such comparison, but, I believe, his “relative materialism” could hardly reject this conclusion.

What then is new or abrupt here is the “genetic” standpoint, according to which “my mind” is “derived” in such a way as to be able to “trace *in some way* its origin, with that of other minds, from one indifferent material” (my emphasis), because the “selves [in plural] find themselves from the start in common dependence upon one indifferent Nature”, the sole ground for such “common dependence” being his unfounded hypothesis that their “points of view are essentially akin”. Here, Eliot apparently confuses “self”, “mind”, “point of view”, “finite centre”, and “monad”, perhaps due to the fact that he avoids the term “body” in this discussion, in which he is so heavily indebted to “Nature” and/or “material” for somehow grounding the very argument. In other words, here is, I submit, another case of the symptomatic rupture in the text, or eruption of the unnamed “body” in Theory, just as we have discussed in the previous section. And so, in much the similar way as above, Eliot immediately turns back to Theory – in fact, already in the following paragraph. Mark the sense of uncertainty, or of being threatened by symptoms, betrayed in such phrases as “seems to” and “can we find”, as well as in the manner of appealing to his earlier argument (“we find” . . . “I repeat”):

The self, we find, seems to depend upon a world which in turn depends upon it; and nowhere, I repeat, can we find anything original or ultimate. And the self depends as well upon other selves; it is not given as a direct experience, but is an interpretation of experience by interaction with other selves (see *Appearance and Reality*, p.219). The self is a construction, and yet the (KE 146)

Astonishingly, when Eliot re-confirms the authentically constructionist thesis that “[t]he self [as well as the “world”] is a construction”, but he is apparently expected to go on (“and yet”) to let the “But, *of course*, . . .” moment briefly but stingingly interrupt Theory, the paragraph is abruptly cut short. According to the editor, “Page 186 of the original typescript ends with this dangling phrase. Page 187 then follows immediately with the new paragraph . . . Some material, intervening between these two paragraphs, has obviously been removed” (Editor’s note 44; *KE* 175). No doubt, some accident – and yet, an accident all too symptomatic of the text’s repression of the “body”, “one indifferent Nature”, or “an indifferent material”, which has, in fact, been defined in the preceding paragraph to constitute the “origin” of selfhood, but, now, “nowhere, I repeat, can we find anything original or ultimate”. Then, as if nothing had happened, the new paragraph opens a critique of Leibniz, who “appears to have made the error, it is true, of identifying a point of view with a felt unit, or self” (*KE* 146) – so that now, yet again, the dangerous intruder, the “self” or a “felt<sup>250</sup> unit”, is safely eliminated. However, even though Eliot purified a “point of view” of the pre-theoretical residues of the [bodily] “self”, thus successfully generalizing it, there would still remain, or recur, the question of how to unify those generalized but still various “points of views”, or “worlds”, now that his quasi-Spinozian hypothesis of the “common dependence upon one indifferent Nature” seems also untenable. Here, once again, Eliot resorts to the dialectical theory of “self-transcendence”:

The point of view (or finite centre) has for its object one consistent world, and accordingly no finite centre can be self-sufficient, for the life of a soul does not consist in the contemplation of one consistent world but in the painful task of unifying (to a greater or less extent) jarring and incompatible ones, and passing, when possible, from two or more discordant viewpoints to a higher which shall somehow include and transmute them. (*KE* 147-8)

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<sup>250</sup> Recall the “felt continuity” in the above discussion.

A “higher”, or more general, point of view “shall *somehow* include and transmute” the lower, or more particular, individuals – just as the Nation-State, identified as a general (or “molar”) Subject of the World History, shall *somehow* transmute every single individual into a particular subject, who is “essentially akin” (e.g., racially) with all the other members of the Nation-State and whose “meaning” is solely given by its *assimilation* to the “more valuable” Whole.<sup>251</sup> The Particular-General Axis is on the move.

Eliot’s navigation between Scylla and Charybdis – between an order-obsessed rage for Theory and a fetishistic affection for the particular – is, after all, not a middle passage, but a direct course towards the theoretical (or *metaphysical*) generalization (the Particular-General Axis), threatened by sporadic eruptions of (often *poetical*) vortices of the repressed singularities, such as the “body”, “one indifferent Nature”, and “an indifferent material” (the Singular-Universal Axis). In other words, straightforward attention to the ordered “world” is, here and there, ruptured by rhizomic intensities of the primordial “one indifferent Nature” (Compare “the world, so far as it is a world at all, tends to organize itself into an articulate whole. The real is the organized. And this statement is metaphysics” (*KE* 82) with “The selves, on the contrary, find themselves from the start in common dependence upon one indifferent Nature” (*KE* 145)). Such a narrative of a straight stream with sporadic ruptures is, as it were, the very matrix of Eliot’s *ethology* of reading – his “academic philosophizing” interrupted by his “*real* art”; his “impersonal theory” dogged by “personality and emotions”<sup>252</sup>; and even his “idea of a Christian society” eroded by “freethinking Jews”. I may, in passing, add one more example from his literary

<sup>251</sup> For discussion of the political unfolding of this Theory, see Chapter Five below.

<sup>252</sup> It is rather stimulating to find that Eliot’s shrewd observation of his fellow “sceptical patrician”, Henry Adams, rings uncannily true of such a “matrix” of his own “ethology”: “This is conspicuously a Puritan inheritance: if some millionaires and philanthropists are occupied in doing good to others, and by force, in cheerful innocence of any need of cleansing or furnishing their own minds, still there are always others whose conscience lays upon them the heavy burden of self-improvement. They are usually sensitive people, and they want to do something great; dogged by the shadow of self-conscious incompetence, they are predestined failures” (“A Sceptical Patrician” 361). It would indeed be of great interest to investigate to what extent this “Puritan inheritance” is an efficient cause of forming and de-forming Eliot’s “ethology” and his career.

theory: the classic “mythical method”, famously displaying Eliot’s order-drive (“a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (“Ulysses, Order and Myth” (1923); *SP* 177)) is, in fact, preceded by the near-forgotten, or repressed, “historical method”, which enigmatically describes, much like his contemporary Walter Benjamin,<sup>253</sup> a fetishistic art of a collector and its revelatory (almost cabalistic) consequence (“As the present is no more than the present existence, the present significance, of the entire past, Mr. Pound proceeds by acquiring the entire past; and when the entire past is acquired, the constituents fall into place and the present is revealed” (“The Method of Mr. Pound” (1919) 1065)).<sup>254</sup>

Such a matrix is surely at work, when “one indifferent Nature” abruptly breaks the smoothly-flowing stream of Theory, only to be instantaneously repressed by the constructionist thesis and the Particular-General spiral of the never-ending “self-transcendence” of a point of view. But the textual rupture – a *physical* rupture in this case: “and yet the” – in the middle is absolutely glaring. The editor of Eliot’s doctoral dissertation refers to his *Monist* article, “Leibniz’ Monads and Bradley’s Finite Centres”, for filling this accidental gap, in which we find the following paragraph of great significance:

Leibniz does not succeed in establishing the reality of several substances. On the other hand, just as Leibniz’ pluralism is ultimately based upon faith, so Bradley’s universe, actual only in finite centres, is only by an act of faith unified. Upon inspection, it falls away into the isolated finite experiences out of which it is put

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<sup>253</sup> Mark here the contemporaneity of Eliot and Benjamin not only in time but also in sensibility. Benjamin’s philosophy of history is heavily indebted to his intense study of the Baroque dramas, while “Gerontion” owes much in its form and content to Eliot’s study of Jacobean dramas, an English version of the Baroque. Both are, in short, products of their “historical method” concerning the European Baroque.

<sup>254</sup> As for the significance of the “historical method”, repressed virtually by the later, more advertised “mythical method”, see my “Mapping T. S. Eliot 1917-1923”, especially its final section, “Towards the Portrait of the Artist as a Collector”.

together. Like monads they aim at being one; each expanded to completion, to the full reality latent within it, would be identical with the whole universe. But in so doing it would lose the actuality, the here and now, which is essential to the small reality which it actually achieves. (KE 202)

The latter part of this passage, which apparently describes the result of an “inspection” (an ideal experiment), is as ambivalent and confusing as any of the passages quoted so far, but, all the more for its ambivalence, it is indeed representative of what we have called the dilemma of the “self” in “self-transcendence”. What is of great significance here is that the answer to this dilemma is dogmatically pronounced, namely: “only by an act of faith unified”. What is “an act of faith”?

Of course, it is easy to read Eliot’s future religious conversion in this phrase (“an act of faith”) here – I would not call it a misreading, but rather, simply, a weak reading in retrospect. A stronger, or more positive, reading would be, I submit, that it is a faith in the essentialist proposition that “our points of view are *essentially* akin” – an unfounded, yet foundational, proposition that stands *outside* of philosophy.<sup>255</sup> By this and this only, a

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<sup>255</sup> It must be emphasized that the context for “faith” here is concerned specifically with philosophy, or the *outside* (i.e., foundations and/or limits) of philosophy, and not at all with religion. The precedence is found in later Bradley, who, in the “Introductory” to *Essays on Truth and Reality* (1914), writes: “Philosophy demands, and in the end it rests on, what may fairly be termed faith. It has, we may say, in a sense to presuppose its conclusion in order to prove it. It tacitly assumes something in general to be true in order to carry this general truth out in detail. And its conclusion, further, is not, and never could be, carried out in detail actually and completely. Thus philosophy stops short of a goal which it takes nevertheless to be somehow reached. And, if philosophy has to admit that in the end it fails to see and to understand exactly how this goal is attained, the end of philosophy is realized outside philosophy and, in a sense, only for faith” (*Truth* 15). Although Eliot no doubt shares this sentiment and arrives at his own version of “faith” (i.e., essential kinship), it is interesting to find that earlier, in one of his papers for the graduate courses in philosophy at Harvard (“The Validity of Artificial Distinction”; TS Houghton), he seems to have maintained that Bradley is, in fact, successful in constructing a system without such assumption, or “faith”: “It may be asked whether it is not possible to construct a philosophy without making any assumption of constant terms into which the rest are resolved[,] or whether, even if such assumptions are made, they may not be sufficiently qualified later. I believe that ‘Appearance and Reality’, with certain reservations, satisfies this ideal. Nevertheless, I must pursue this admission with the charge that the positive merit of the book in a sense is that it unfolds no positive result whatever” – to “certain reservations” here, Eliot adds a handwritten marginal note: “e.g. I cannot see my way to the admission that ‘Reality is Spiritual’”,

particular being can maintain its own particular essence (“la grosse difficulté de Spinoza” [2] & [3]) and can, at the same time, tend towards the ultimate unity or “identi[ty] with the whole universe” as well as “trace” its “origin” through its “essential” kinship with all the other particular beings, not through the “eternal” essence as *referred* to and thus vouchsafed by God (“la grosse difficulté de Spinoza” [1] & [4]). And yet, as we have discussed above in philosophical terms and will presently discuss in political terms in the ensuing chapter, such commonality based on “essential” kinship will lead to *assimilation*, not to the immanent God of Spinoza, but to that which claims to *generally* represent the very essence, hence transcend all the particulars that are proclaimed to share this essence. In this sense, it is fair to conclude that Eliot the philosopher has attempted to begin *without* God and struggles to ward it off through and through in order to preserve the individuality of every particular being (i.e., coincidence of essence and existence in each), believing that all those particular beings can, rather than falling into chaos and anarchy, be unified by an “act of faith” in the “essential” kinship with each other – only to find, rather ironically, that this very “essential” kinship lets those individualized particulars *transmuted* into “subjects”, hence *assimilated* to another kind of transcendent God, such as Race, Nation, and Empire.

Finally, it is in this context that we can understand not only the reason for but also the *critical* significance of Eliot’s singling out *E* 2p37, rather than 2p38-40, for his reading of “common notions”. As far as Spinoza’s *Ethics* is concerned, the significance of *E* 2p37 (“That which is common to all (see *E* 2p13le2), and that which is equally in a part and in the whole, do not constitute the essence of an individual thing [*rei singularis*]”) lies in its

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probably an oblique reference to George Moore’s “Refutation of Idealism” (1903). Such ambivalence between Eliot’s earlier appreciation of Bradley’s radical anti-foundationalism and his later acceptance of Bradleyan “faith” probably as a direct result of his earlier “reservations” – i.e., between philosophy without any foundational assumption and philosophy founded on some principles without (e.g., “faith”) – is indeed *critically* important. It is in this context that Eliot’s marginal note (“i.e. / we cannot / conduct any / investigation / without its / assumption”) to *E* 2p8s2 (“he would indeed be like one who should say that he had a true idea and yet should doubt whether it were false”) ought to be read. See also the opening discussion of a similar issue in Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*, from which he presumably leant this issue.

support for the proof of *E* 2p44c2 (“It is the nature of reason to perceive things under a certain species of eternity”), that is to say, *ratio*, or “common notions”, is not involved in the essence of any individual thing, so that it “must be conceived without any relation of time, but under a certain species of eternity”, hence bridging the “Second Kind of Knowledge” and the “Third Kind of Knowledge”. For Eliot, on the other hand, *E* 2p37 would directly contradict his “faith” in the “essential” kinship, or a kind of commonality based on the “essence” common to all. In other words, Eliot’s radical contradiction with Spinoza, hence a most *critical* moment in Eliot’s reading of Spinoza, as regards the essence and existence of the particular (human) being that should stand *without* God, falls onto this *E* 2p37, one of the least mentioned propositions of all in the whole *Ethics* of Spinoza.

#### **“After such knowledge, what forgiveness?”**

To the best of my knowledge, *E* 2p37 is, even in the *Ethics* itself, only mentioned once – in the above 2p44c2d concerning “a certain species of eternity”. Naturally, even an avid reader of Spinoza studies will hardly find a significant discussion that deals with this proposition alone without referring to the more famous *E* 2p38-40. Here is, however, one exception – an exception so *critically* important and illuminating that I simply wish it to conclude our “Reading T. S. Eliot Reading Spinoza” – namely, Giorgio Agamben’s *The Coming Community*:

This means that the idea and common nature do not constitute the essence of singularity, that singularity is, in this sense, absolutely inessential, and that, consequently, the criterion of its difference should be sought elsewhere than in an essence or a concept. The relationship between the common and the singular can thus no longer be conceived as the persistence of an identical essence in single individuals, and therefore the very problem of individuation risks appearing as a

pseudoproblem.

Nothing is more instructive in this regard than the way Spinoza conceives of the common. All bodies, he says, have it in common to express the divine attribute of extension (*E* 2p13le2). And yet what is common cannot in any case constitute the essence of the single case (*E* 2p37). Decisive here is the idea of an *inessential* commonality, a solidarity that in no way concerns an essence. *Taking-place, the communication of singularities in the attribute of extension, does not unite them in essence, but scatters them in existence.* (*Coming* 18-9)

The “idea of an *inessential* commonality [una comunità *inessenziale*]” among *singularities*, as opposed to Eliot’s imaginary “essential kinship” between particular beings – that is indeed the “Ethics” that Spinoza has envisioned and that Eliot cannot read. Hence, Eliot’s dilemma between a rage for universal (i.e., generalizing) Theory and imaginary affections for the essential particulars (not the love of *inessential* singularities). Let us read more of Agamben, who talks of “*qualunque*” (Whatever<sup>256</sup>), or “*quodlibet*”, at the very beginning of this small pamphlet:

The Whatever in question here relates to singularity not in its indifference with respect to a common property (to a concept, for example: being red, being French, being Muslim), but only in its being *such as it is*. Singularity is thus freed from the false dilemma that obliges knowledge to choose between the ineffability of the individual and the intelligibility of the universal. The intelligible, according to a beautiful expression of Levi ben Gershon (Gersonides), is neither a universal nor an individual included in a series, but rather “singularity insofar as it is whatever singularity.” In this conception, such-and-such being is reclaimed from its having this or that property, which identifies it as belonging to this or that set, to this or that class (the reds, the French, the Muslims) – and it is reclaimed not for another class nor for the simple generic absence of any belonging, but for its being-*such*, for belonging itself. . . . (*Coming* 1-2)

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<sup>256</sup> As for the significance of this term in Italian and the difficulty to render it into English, See Michael Hardt’s Translator’s Note 1.



Failing to “reclaim”, from the Particular-General Axis, Spinoza’s “*res singularis*” as that which “is thus freed from the false dilemma”, Eliot the philosopher and political thinker is liable to fall into the logic of *assimilation* to a greater *essential* commonality that claims to *generally* represent the “essence” common to all individuals who are, in turn, proclaimed to be its *particular* members. Not only his Philosophy and Politics, but his Poetics as well: “What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality” (“Tradition and the Individual Talent”; *SW* 52-3).

What about his Poetry? We may merely suggest that Poetry, like Ethics, be a *topos* where “such-and-such being is reclaimed from its having this or that property” – *les mots justes* are reclaimed from meanings; poems in themselves from hermeneutics. A time-(dis)honored debate over the “meaning” of the “Notes on *The Waste Land*” – a debate, in a sense, between *The Waste Land* and its “Notes”, or between Poetry and Theory (i.e., Poetics, Politics, Philosophy) – is an interesting case in point. It is, I believe, fair to read *The Waste Land* as *referred* to (Spinozian “*referre*”, not “represent”) the “idea of an *inessential* commonality, a solidarity that in no way concerns an essence” among those Godless beings, *Whatever* beings, human or otherwise, that come and go in fragments, solely at the mercy of the rhythm of the Poem. But the Theory would see a sign of an *essential* commonality underlying or overarching these fragments that the Poem has shored against its ruins. Such Theory-fever has indeed started with Eliot himself by adding the “Notes” to the Poem, especially the famous Tiresias note:

Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a ‘character’, is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem. (*CP* 82)

The blind prophet *sees* the “substance” of the poem. This “substance” is nothing but an *essential* commonality, “uniting all the rest” by *transmuting* (“melt[ing]”) all the *inessential* singularities into one essence. This is certainly not how Gerontion would “use” his lost sight for a “closer contact” with Substance or God – the Real, the Universal *sive* the Virtual. Indeed, Gerontion’s absolute despair would never allow such a redemptive, or *henotic*, unity by return – the return to an *essential* commonality under the blind (i.e., irreciprocal) gaze, cf. the “*isshi doujin*” (universal equality under the gaze of One Emperor) ideology used and abused by the Japanese Empire to justify its brutal assimilation policies (See Chapter Five below).

It is well known that Eliot originally wanted to print “Gerontion as prelude in book or pamphlet form” (LI 629) of *The Waste Land*, but Pound strongly advised him “NOT to print Gerontion as preface”, for “One dont miss it AT all as the thing now stands” (630). Eliot agreed. But, just before its publication in book form, Eliot had to add the “Notes” instead, apparently due to the publisher’s request to increase the number of pages. What is missed by replacing “Gerontion” as prelude by the “Notes” as supplement seems immense, indeed. If only such replacement had never been made, we would have, instead of the “Notes” that represent Tiresias as a “spectator . . . uniting all the rest”, the prelude in which Gerontion, whose “essential identity” with Tiresias is often discussed by the commentators,<sup>257</sup> forces us into “a thousand small deliberations [that] protract the profit” – knowledge would always-already be *deferred* without being *referred* to God or Nature. Instead of *seeing* the “substantial unity” of the poem, we would not be able to stop ruminating – almost like the “repetition compulsion” that Freud found in “Beyond Pleasure Principle” in the same year as “Gerontion” was published – over “many cunning passages,

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<sup>257</sup> E.g. “If Eliot had decided notwithstanding [Pound’s advice] to use [“Gerontion”] with *The Waste Land*, the essential identity of Gerontion with Tiresias would be plainer than it is” (Grover Smith *Poetry* 65). A very different and inspiring take on this issue is found in Murata’s *T. S. Eliot and Indo-Buddhist Philosophy*, in which Gerontion and Tiresias are together identified as the Hindu *puruṣa* incarnates (183-193; 227-232).

contrived corridors and issues”, i.e., all those fragments scattered in *The Waste Land*, not hoping that we will ever “have . . . reached conclusion” but only persuading ourselves that we “have not made this show purposelessly” (CP 40). Think now *The Waste Land* had such a prelude:

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now  
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors  
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,  
Guides us by vanities. Think now  
She gives when our attention is distracted  
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions  
That the giving famishes the craving . . .  
(“Gerontion” ll. 33-39; CP 40)

The drafts of “Gerontion”, held by the Berg Collection at New York Public Library, reveal that “History” was, in fact, “Nature” until the very final revision before publication<sup>258</sup> – “She” was, indeed, “one indifferent Nature” herself. I would here like to propose that we hear an echo – a symptomatic eruption of the magmatic undercurrent – of the following passage from Josiah Royce’s Gifford Lectures, *Nature, Man, and the Moral Order* (the second series of *The World and the Individual*):

It is our interest in social organization that has given us both industrial art and empirical science. As industrial art regards its facts as mere *contrivances* that have no life of their own, but that merely express their human artificer’s intents, so

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<sup>258</sup> Although this substitution of “History” for “Nature” gives James Longenbach a significant starting point in his *Modernist Poetics of History*, his interest is apparently only in the substitution of “History”, and he does not give any plausible account of why it was originally “Nature” and nothing else, but instead he only provides a rather irrelevant quotation from Eliot’s 1936 essay on Tennyson, in which Eliot regards Tennyson’s “Nature” as “that strange abstraction” (*Modernist* 192). This I take for another example of repression of “one indifferent Nature”, which is, to use Eliot’s words on *Hamlet*’s failure, “inexpressible, because it is in *excess* of the facts” (SW 101).

a philosophy of *Nature*, founded solely upon our special sciences, tends to treat the facts of *Nature* (regarded in the light of our *cunningly contrived* conceptions) as having no inner meaning, and as being mere embodiments of our formulas. Both doctrines are perfectly justified as expressions of the perspective view of *Nature* which we men naturally take. Neither view can stand against any deeper reason that we may have for interpreting our experiences of *Nature* as a hint of a vaster realm of life and of meaning of which we men form a part, and of which the final unity is in God's life. (*Nature* 204; my emphases)

This passage is the very conclusion of Lecture IV ("Physical and Social Reality"), which deals with the "reality" of "our fellow-men" (hence, concerning the question of solipsism) as well as that of "material Nature" (hence, concerning the ontological bases of "Man" and his activities). In Royce's view, "our science" and "our industrial art" – with their "cunningly contrived" concepts and materials – "cooperate to the end of *man's mastery over Nature*" (200), so that both "are perfectly justified" and yet neither "can stand against any deeper reason" – and this "deeper reason" is, I contend, fundamentally Spinozian, i.e., the Spinozian "science" that discovers (*invenire*), in each and every individual (i.e., fragmentary) being, a "hint" of the Virtual Whole, i.e., God or Nature. This Royce's vision of Nature merges with Santayana's final cosmic vision in the last pages *Reason in Common Sense* (Volume One of *The Life of Reason*, which was an assigned reading for the class Eliot took at Harvard):

Now man is a part of nature and her organisation may be regarded as the foundation of his own: the word nature is therefore less equivocal than it seems, for every nature is Nature herself in one of her more specific and better articulated forms. Man therefore represents the universe that sustains him; his existence is a proof that the cosmic equilibrium that fostered his life is a natural equilibrium, capable of being long maintained. Some of the ancients thought it eternal; physics now suggests a different opinion. But even if this equilibrium, by which the stars are kept in their courses and human progress is allowed to proceed, is

fundamentally unstable, it shows what relative stability nature may attain.

(*Reason* 174)

Man in his actual existence is a “hint” as well as a “proof” of the Virtual Whole. Even though Royce and Santayana are such contrastive figures with such contrastive images of Spinoza (See Chapter One),<sup>259</sup> when “Nature” with a capital N is invoked by them – and by their mutual student in his dissertation (“one indifferent Nature”, albeit abrupt) and his poem (“Nature has many cunning passages”, albeit repressed) – the specter of Spinoza silently emerges. In fact, Royce’s description of the way in which “our attention is distracted” from such a “closer contact” with the Virtual Whole is particularly reminiscent of Spinoza’s critique of the illusion of independent subject-hood (most notably demonstrated in the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*), which has indeed been the crux of Eliot’s “great difficulties”. Royce writes:

I learn to conceive of my fellow and myself as falsely sundered, or even as Independent Beings, whose isolation from one another becomes emphasized by well-known social motives . . . in brief, by all that makes man forget that he and his fellow together are empirically known as fragmentary hints of the real unity in variety of the life of the Absolute. (*Nature* 176)

Being “fragmentary hints” is wholly different from “melt[ing]” into each other. Although

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<sup>259</sup> In his memoir, Santayana provides us with an amazing insight that may suggest that only Spinoza could have bridged those two stubborn philosophers who held the otherwise incommensurable systems: “[Pollock told Santayana that in his book on Spinoza] perhaps the science was emphasised at the expense of the religion. Yet that the object of this religion was *Deus sive Natura* – the universe, whatever it may be, of which we are a part – was never concealed or denaturalised. Royce himself seemed to suffer less from the plague of idealistic criticism in this case than usual” (*Persons* 234). The secret to such a rare unison was perhaps due to the fact that “Spinoza was not only a complete naturalist, but, by a rare combination, also a spiritual man, seeing and accepting the place of the human heart in the universe; accepting it not grudgingly or viciously or frivolously, as your worldling does, but humbly and joyously” (235). Indeed, such an excellent combination is as difficult as it is rare.

the doctrine of “One Purpose” in the “self-representative system”, which Royce presents in the celebrated “Supplementary Essay” to the first series of *The World and the Individual* (*The Four Historical Conceptions of Being*), may seem rather dubious – perhaps as dubious as Spinoza’s “God” – at first sight, his strenuous efforts to counter Bradley’s “apparently most destructive arguments” (475)<sup>260</sup> and to theorize “the development of an Infinite Multitude out of the expression of a Single Purpose” (502), by appealing to the “perfect map of England that includes the map itself [*ad infinitum*]” and also even to the cutting-edge mathematical theory of Dedekind’s Infinite set (*Kette*), do, I contend, touch upon the Deleuzo-Spinozian question of “expression”, i.e., “(1) the expressive character of particular individuals, and (2) an immanence of being” (*Expressionism* 11) – Royce, much like Deleuze, insists that “the concept of the actually Infinite . . . is a *positive and concrete conception*, quite capable of individual embodiment” (*Four* 565; my emphasis). In other words, Royce’s take on “the relation of this moment’s passing purpose to the whole world-purpose of which it is a hint and a fragment” (*Nature* 52) may safely be *disposed* on the Singular-Universal Axis.

Had “Gerontion” not been replaced by the “Notes”, we would have, instead of the integration of all the particulars – or *assimilation* of the subjects – enforced by Tiresias (whom I am tempted to call “General” Tiresias), a kind of disintegration – or *resistance* to assimilation – that we find towards the end of “Gerontion”: “De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled / Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear / In fractured atoms” (ll. 67-9; *CP* 41). This is, indeed, a *molecular* disintegration – beyond the Particular-General circuit.

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<sup>260</sup> Cf. “I maintain, then, with a full consciousness of the paradoxes involved, that the Reality is indeed a Self, whatever else it is or is not. For the Absolute, as I insist, would have to be not apparently, but really a Self, even in order to be (as Mr. Bradley seems to imagine his Absolute) a sort of self-absorbing sponge, that endlessly sucked in, and ‘transformed,’ its own selfhood, until nothing was left of itself but the mere empty spaces where the absorbent Self had been. . . . As a fact, however, the Absolute is no sponge. It is not a cryptic or self-ashamed, but an absolutely self-expressive self (*Four* 565). Although Eliot does not refer to this “Supplementary Essay” in his dissertation, it is hard to surmise that he has not taken notice of this famous critique of Bradley by his teacher – perhaps Eliot could not but “neglect *consciously*” that which is too close to his heart, if not to his mind.

Furthermore, had “Nature” not been replaced by “History”, then a Spinozist reader would read *The Waste Land* as the immanent plain itself, where the words inscribed on the corner stone are “The Peace which passeth understanding”<sup>261</sup> – the Poem that *resists* any general, meaning-ful, redemptive reading (which guides the scholars by vanities ceaselessly, for the giving only famishes the craving – a hermeneutical limbo), but that only allows singular, meaning-less, *Whatever* mis/reading. *After such knowledge, what forgiveness?*

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<sup>261</sup> It is of great interest to find the following passage from Royce’s “Supplementary Essay”, concerning “the ineffable experience” of Mysticism, which is so reminiscent of the starting point of Eliot’s dissertation (“annihilation and utter night”) and the ending of *The Waste Land* (“Peace which passeth understanding”) that it might even be said to have prepared the “path in the essentially pathless wilderness” that leads Eliot’s Philosophy to Poetry: “Yet [thought] reveals, in its own negative way, the road to absolute peace and truth. This road, however, is a path in the essentially pathless wilderness. This revelation is explicitly an absolute darkness. While you think, you have not won the truth; for thought is illusion. But if you merely cease to think, you have thereby won nothing at all. . . . The peace that passeth understanding fulfils all the needs of understanding. Hence, in this peace thought finds itself satisfied, and ceases. Therefore is Being here attained” (*Four* 547).

## **Chapter Five**

### **Tradition and the Metic Empires**

A man is only important as he is classed.

--- T. S. Eliot, "Eeldrop and Appleplex"

But surely Nature creates individuals, not nations.

--- Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*

"Reading T. S. Eliot Reading Spinoza" has already ended on the previous page – ended with *Nature*. And yet, *History* informs us of its *afterlives* (*Überleben*), in which "a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself" through "translations" in the special sense of the word that Walter Benjamin, another prominent contemporary of Eliot, theorized in 1921.<sup>262</sup> In this *supplementary* chapter, we will narrate the three different, but inter-connected, *afterlives* of Eliot's Theory. If the narrative above has been "from Philosophy to Poetry", it will now be "from Philosophy to Politics". If the method above

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<sup>262</sup> See Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator" (1921): "Translatability is an essential quality of certain works, which is not to say that it is essential for the works themselves that they be translated; it means, rather, that a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself in its translatability. It is evident that no translation, however good it may be, can have any significance as regards the original. Nonetheless, it does stand in the closest relationship to the original by virtue of the original's translatability; in fact, this connection is all the closer since it is no longer of importance to the original. We may call this connection a natural one, or, more specifically, a vital one. Just as the manifestations of life are intimately connected with the phenomenon of life without being of importance to it, a translation issues from the original – not so much from its life as from its afterlife (*Überleben*)" (*Selected I* 254).



employed has mainly been the “symptomatic reading” of Eliot’s mis/readings of Spinoza, Bradley, et al., it will now be that of comparison – not a conventional comparative method of *identifying* certain direct influence or essential commonality among diverse texts, but rather the method that Natalie Melas theorizes after Jean-Luc Nancy’s notion of “*com-paraison*” in *La communauté désœuvrée* – the comparative method based on the notions of “*partage*” (dividing / partaking) and “*semblable*” among singularities, resisting assimilation to any kind of essential identity or commonality:

The *semblable* does not hark to prior identity, to an original recognizable sameness; in the place of such an original identification there is the partaking of singularities in which similarity is constituted by the simultaneous experience of separateness . . . Where similarity is exposed rather than recognized it leads into alterity rather than assimilation. No longer the recognition of sameness nor the sublation of difference, similarity becomes differential, an effect of externalizing difference. . . . The process of comparison is no longer assimilation to a preexisting common ground since simultaneity replaces the priority of recognition; nor is comparison the constitution of such a common ground out of perceived similarities. (Melas *All* 99-100)

The commonality based on the “*semblable*” described here is, I believe, *comparable* to what we have above discussed in terms of Agamben’s “inessential commonality” among *Whatever* singularities.<sup>263</sup> In that respect, Eliot’s Theory is a failed “*com-paraison*”, as it appeals, after all, to assimilation to “essential kinship” rather than alterity vouchsafed in “inessential commonality”. In failing, none the less, it has left a significant portion of symptoms that constitute an open space, or a “contact zone”, for the *comparative* method in the above sense to intervene, as the “double reading” of Eliot’s Theory and his own

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<sup>263</sup> It should be no accident that Nancy, in another important essay on “la Comparution”, refers to Agamben’s *The Coming Community* among others in a long footnote on the notion of “*partage*” (Nancy et Bailly *Comparution* 56).

contemporaneous Poetry may well attest to. In what follows, we'll take for example three cases of such "*com-paraison*" – Eliot's own, Nishida Kitarō's, and Ch'oe Chaesō's – that may all seem, in the end, doomed to failure in the face of Theory's imperialistic power (*potestas*). Nevertheless, the potentialities (*potentia*) that may make their co-appearance, effected by the dividing and partaking of those singular mis/readings of one seminal text ("Tradition and the Individual Talent"), ought not to be underestimated.<sup>264</sup>

### Variations of "essential kinship"

Our reading of Eliot reading Spinoza has culminated in his "faith" in "essential kinship" among individual beings as the willy-nilly necessary result of a theoretical *strategy* to overcome the inevitable solipsism without entrusting their essences to "one indifferent Nature", as opposed to the "*inessential* commonality" envisioned by Agamben reading Spinoza. This strategy, characteristic of Eliot's Theory, is aimed at "uniting all the rest" through the *essential* commonality that is somehow generally shared by the members (the Particular-General Axis), without facing the "overwhelming question" as regards the Virtual Whole and its singular actualizations (the Singular-Universal Axis). Meanwhile, a deep undercurrent of his *ethos* that never loses the sense of "contact" with the Virtual Whole does erupt, abruptly, "in very peculiar and symptomatic circumstances" (Althusser *Reading* 27) as ruptures and traces in the texts – i.e., as symptoms of an "absent *exteriority*". So far, this seems purely *theoretical*, but the Theory that always disguises as "universal" but is, in fact, only *general* tends to show, when put into practice, "the inner darkness of

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<sup>264</sup> Although there is no longer any space or time in this thesis, it may be of great theoretical significance, as Melas herself does in the successful case of Édouard Glissant's "Relation", to read, for instance, Eliot and E. K. Brathwaite in the *comparative* method described above. For several interesting attempts at such reading, see, e.g., Pollard's *New World Modernisms* and ten Kortenaar's "Where the Atlantic meets the Caribbean".

exclusion”, which is, I maintain, a necessary consequence of the essence-based thinking that arbitrarily defines, thus *delimits*, the “essence”, according to the alleged general interests of a particular group at particular socio-political conjunctures.

One case of such practical application is, for instance, found in Eliot’s 2-sheet typescript, “Message broadcast on BBC European Service on the occasion of the liberation of Rome” (TS; King’s), in which he speaks of “the debt of all European peoples to Rome” – “not of our several debts . . . but of our common debt”. Then he defines the alleged “kinship” among all European peoples:

It is the formation given us in the past, the tradition of Latin culture which we have in common, together with our common religion, that created the European consciousness, the common mind in which we are Europeans. If the claims of this cultural kinship, which is Europe, and this spiritual kinship, which is Christendom, are to be respected; if the mutual bonds which have been forgotten in peace, before they were broken in war, are to be re-affirmed: we must not only acknowledge our debt to Rome in the past, but maintain and multiply it in the future. (1)

With the end of the brutal WWII in sight, the “essential kinship” was now interpreted by Eliot himself as the “cultural [and] spiritual kinship” that is Christian Europe. Such an idea – an EU ideology in embryo, as it were – was no doubt received as progressive and indeed liberating in the war-stricken and devastated Europe at that time, unless you were a non-Christian residence in Europe, such as the Jews who had just returned from the concentration camps. And yet, it is still a very benign ideology and certainly has a potentially trans-national moment. In fact, Eliot’s 1949 address in Hamburg, entitled “The Idea of a European Society” (TS; King’s), develops the argument to that direction. As he had been awarded the Nobel Prize and had published *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (immediately translated into German and many other languages) in the previous

year, Eliot was treated by his hosts as “some kind of oracle as well as a poet” (Ackroyd 297-8) on this occasion. At the beginning of the lecture, Eliot, as always, makes clear that “It is . . . not with political or economic or scientific plans of unity that I am concerned, but with the problem of the unity of culture, and specifically European culture” (2) – Note here that it was the year two separate German Republics became independent. One of the main targets of critique is exportation of the “machines” devised by the social engineers (“the type of mind which attempts to plan society”) in one “society” to another, such as “systems of government, justice and education” (i.e., the Ideological State Apparatuses), which are “evolved by a particular social organism for its own needs”. “But,” Eliot continues,

it may take the form, in any scheme for a supra-national organisation of the world in general, or of Europe in particular, of two errors: one, the assumption that the unit of calculation is the individual, the other that the unit is the nation as it exists to-day. The latter assumption attaches too much importance to the nation; the former gives it too little importance. A European Society which was merely a union of nations would not be a society, because it would form no organic entity, with a personality of its own: it would not have the effect of making the individual human being more proud of being a European than of being merely a German, a Frenchman, or whatever he is to-day. A Europe which was a mass of individuals owing no allegiance to anything but Europe would be merely a machine.

(5-6; Eliot’s underlines)

This all sounds like a benign, or “liberal”, cultural relativism that shows a distaste for enforcing one’s social machinery upon others (such as the Soviet communism), as well as a “progressive” critique of nationalism. His warning against the tendencies “towards a monotonous uniformity and towards excessive centralisation of culture in its capital city” (7) seems to well attest to such observation.

However, just like our contemporary ideologues of “multiculturalism” and/or “globalization”, Eliot’s “reactionary” ideology shines through in every page. His example

of a failure of “exportation” of the social machinery is, for instance, “colonial governments”, where “a governing people has, often with the most laudable intentions, attempted to introduce systems of government of justice, of education, unsuited to the people whom they governed and were attempting to train for self-government” (5) – this aside is all the more significant because it was made in 1949. After all, the blame is not on the brutal colonialism, but on the fact that “the ideal machine does not seem to suit the actual human material” (*ibid.*). This may still be simply “typical” of the British ruling class who needed some kind of psychic compensation for the loss of their vast Empire, and so one may well say it is quite insignificant. But, when it comes to the “idea of European Society” as an “organic entity”, his terms become most dubious, to say the least:

In my last book [*NTDC*], I spoke of the importance of a differentiation of social classes – not rigid like the Indian caste system, but fluid and allowing of constant migrations between one class and another. This seemed to be an unfortunate term to use: the term “class” connotes to many people, only the abuses and injustice visible in every society in the past, and is therefore associated with strong emotions and passionate prejudices. Perhaps a better term would be “hereditary function”. I mean that in every society there should be different layers of the same culture, and that each layer should draw nourishment from the others and in turn nourish them. And for the transmission of culture – of which the primary agency is the family – it is desirable that the majority of people should live much the same life as their parents, in the same place, and in the same or similar occupations. (8)

Certainly, “hereditary function” does not sound like “a better term” than “social classes”, but is indeed symptomatic of the biologicistic framework of his cultural criticism – in his earlier broadcast to the German people (“The Unity of European Culture”, March 1946; first published only in German, later collected in *NTDC* as Appendix), Eliot employs an all-too-familiar metaphor of “a tree growing” for culture, so that the crux of his “definition

of culture” lies in “the distinction between the material organisation [i.e., machine] of Europe and the spiritual organism [i.e., tree] of Europe” (NTDC 123). This definition is perfectly in line with the “blood-stream” metaphor he has earlier used in his Presidential Address to the Virgil Society in 1944 (“What is a Classic?”)<sup>265</sup> – in that respect, apparently, his views in this regard are utterly unaffected by the end of the War. When he states, “We need variety in unity: not the unity of organisation, but the unity of nature” (NTDC 124), we can clearly see where his philosophical idea of “essential kinship” has landed at the postwar socio-historical conjunctures: a “healthy” organism that is Home of homes – Europe (*la casa Europa*) as *oikos megas*,<sup>266</sup> composed of immobile, “hereditary” families, whose fixed – thus selective and exclusive – “essential kinship” is *a priori*.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> “But my concern here is only with the corrective to provincialism in literature. We need to remind ourselves that, as Europe is a whole (and still, in its progressive mutilation and disfigurement, the organism out of which any greater world harmony must develop), so European literature is a whole, the several members of which cannot flourish, if the same blood-stream does not circulate throughout the whole body. The blood-stream of European literature is Latin and Greek – not as two systems of circulation, but one, for it is through Rome that our parentage in Greece must be traced” (OPP 69-70).

<sup>266</sup> Agamben traces the tendency to “render the Aristotelian opposition between *oikos* and *polis* obsolete”, so that “the *polis* is presented as ‘a large house [*oikos megas*],’ and politics as ‘a {common} economy [*koinē tis oikonomia*]’ . . . [and t]he modern metaphor of the political community as a ‘house’ – ‘the house of Europe’ [*la ‘casa Europa’*] – here finds its archetype” (Kingdom 24-5).

<sup>267</sup> It should also be noted that poetry plays a significant role in Eliot’s organicist and/or racist ideas of the social unity. In “The Social Function of Poetry” (*The Norseman* (Nov. 1943)), Eliot writes: “We observe that poetry differs from every other art in having a value for the people of the poet’s race, which it can have for no other. . . . The impulse towards the literary use of the languages of the peoples began with poetry. And this appears perfectly natural when we realize that poetry has primarily to do with the expression of feeling and emotion; and that feeling and emotion are particular, whereas thought is general. It is easier to think in a foreign language than it is to feel in it. Therefore no art is more stubbornly national than poetry” (452). So that the poet’s ability to express “something in common” beyond the class difference secures a kind of totalitarian solidarity under the leadership of the cultural, rather than social, *élite*: “It is enough that in a homogeneous people the feelings of the most refined and complex have something in common with those of the most crude and simple, which they have not in common with those of people of their own level speaking another language. And, when a civilization is healthy, the great poet will have something to say to his fellow countrymen at every level of education” (453). Needless to say, such a view of the racially homogeneous, “poetic” society is precariously close to the official ideology of the opposite camp, especially that of Heidegger and of the Japanese Romantics. See Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger and the Politics of Poetry*.

Placed at another set of particular socio-historical conjunctures (Virginia, 1933), this seemingly benign, harmlessly metaphysical idea of “essential kinship” betrays its potential violence. Speaking to the Southern audience at the University of Virginia in 1933, Eliot begins his first lecture by paying lip service: “I have been much interested, since the publication a few years ago of a book called *I’ll Take My Stand*, in what is sometimes called the agrarian movement in the South, and I look forward to any further statements by the same group of writers” (ASG 15); “You are farther away from New York; you have been less industrialised and less invaded by foreign races; and you have a more opulent soil” (16). Although Eliot eventually suppressed, literally, these lectures by forbidding any kind of reprint, it was apparently meant to be an ambitious re-formulation of his celebrated “Tradition and the Individual Talent” in a wider context:

Tradition is not solely, or even primarily, the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living form in the course of the formation of a tradition. What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rite to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood kinship of ‘the same people living in the same place’. (ASG 18)

Just like the “cultural kinship” and “spiritual kinship” in the postwar period, this “blood kinship” is no doubt another variation of the philosophical “essential kinship”. It is perhaps needless to cite the following passage, which has caused a furor<sup>268</sup> among the Eliot scholars, but it is, I believe, necessary to read it not simply as an aberrant piece of scandal but as a *logical* consequence of the idea of “essential kinship”:

The population should be homogeneous; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to be fiercely self-conscious or both to become

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<sup>268</sup> As for my own assessment of this furor, see my “Re-reading / T. S. Eliot”.

adulterate. What is still more important is unity of religious background; and reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable. (19-20)

This is the final solution that the philosophical idea of “essential kinship” should require when applied to an extreme, but not necessarily exceptional or exorbitant, case. Besides, what is even more significant is that this “blood kinship” ideology is just as commensurable with the above-discussed anti-/trans-nationalism (i.e., overcoming nationalism by “cultural and spiritual kinship”), as with the extremely racial and racist nationalisms of the Nazi-Germany or Imperial-Japan type, which were, in fact, on the rise exactly at the same time as Eliot made those lectures.<sup>269</sup>

The political application of “essential kinship” is, as Agamben would suggest by reading the “*inessential* commonality” in Spinoza, never universal, but always-already selective and exclusive. Besides, as the above-described vicissitudes of Eliot’s demarcation of “kinship” clearly reveal, it constantly vacillates according to the particular socio-historical conjunctures at which it is placed. For that which claims to *generally* represent the very essence of “kinship” or “commonality”, thus transcending all the particulars that are proclaimed to share this essence (i.e., the logic of *assimilation*), does always feed on the differences that it arbitrarily and provisionally selects genuinely for the sake of its own interests, even though it always disguises itself as the indifferent and universal. All of the above examples of “kinship” are either suppressed or uncollected,

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<sup>269</sup> A very interesting case in point is Eliot’s commentary in *Criterion* (Oct. 1937), in which he picks at a sentence (“Surely, Art is everywhere recognized as international”) from the prefatory statement to a catalogue of the 1937 Exhibition of the “Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy and Cultural Development”. In this apparently pure art criticism, he makes it clear that “national” and “racial” are not compatible, but rather that the “racial” should overcome the “national” *and* the “international” altogether: “Perhaps modern art is international, and if so, that may help to account for its weakness. I cannot think of art as either national or international – these, after all, are modern terms – but as racial and local; and an art which is not representative of a particular people, but ‘international’, or an art which does not represent a particular civilization, but only an abstract civilization-in-general, may lose its source of vitality” (82).



presumably for good reasons, so they may be regarded as ineffective in the public discourse. But, as suggested above, if “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, which is arguably the most read, if not necessarily representative, piece of Eliot’s prose (albeit to his own dismay), may also be placed along the same line, it must have caused some utterly significant consequences – to which we now turn.

### **Tradition and Translation**

“No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists” (SW 49). Thus begins perhaps the most famous paragraph in “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, which may even claim its place, quite legitimately, in the entire history of English literary criticism – not only that, as we presently discuss in the ensuing sections, but also its “significance” travels far beyond the English-speaking world and the field of literary criticism. Indeed, “[y]ou cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead” (*ibid.*) – and also among the yet-to-come.

This paragraph formulates the dynamic relationship between “the *whole* existing order” (i.e., “Tradition”) and “the supervention of novelty” (i.e., “the individual talent”). Fredric Jameson even states that this formulation amounts to “of course a profoundly dialectical concept” (*Marxism* 314), and it has also been inspiring various artists, critics and thinkers in various ways – Ralph Ellison, Hugh MacDiarmid, Derek Walcott, Edward Kamau Brathwaite, and Edward Said, to name but a few<sup>270</sup> – including Nishida Kitarō and

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<sup>270</sup> Cf. “Significantly, a large number of Eliot’s greatest legacies have been to figures working outside, often far outside, the London-centred culture in which Eliot himself spent much of his working life – figures such as MacDiarmid or Ralph Ellison” (Crawford *Devolving* 234). A most important contribution to the issue of postcolonial appropriations of Eliot is Charles W. Pollard’s *New World Modernisms*, in which he points out “the colonial anxiety in Eliot’s idea of tradition” (43), so that “Eliot’s essay has been well received by postcolonial writers because his arguments

Ch'oe Chaesŏ. Let us first look at this formulation, along with two other quotations for comparison and contrast:

The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. (SW 49-50; Eliot's italics)

For comparison: Eliot's earlier formulation of "the system" and "facts" in his doctoral dissertation on Bradley's philosophy:

Facts are not merely found in the world and laid together like bricks, but every fact has in a sense its place prepared for it before it arrives, and without the implication of a system in which it belongs the fact is not a fact at all. The ideality essential to fact means a particular point of view, and means the exclusion of other aspects of the same point of attention. . . . The development of a science would thus be rather organic than mechanical; there is a fitness of the various facts for each other, with that instinctive selection and exclusion which is a characteristic of human personality at its highest. Thus the character of a science, like the character of a man, may be said both to be already present at the moment

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resonate with their colonial experience of fragmentation and aesthetic aspirations for cultural wholeness" (45). J. M. Coetzee, in his 1991 lecture "What is a Classic", also discusses Eliot's "colonial fate" (*Stranger*). Edward Said, as will be presently discussed, takes Eliot for a primary example of his important concept of "affiliation".

of conception, and on the other hand to develop at every moment into something new and unforeseen. But it will have, from its crudest beginnings, a character to which (though it may belie all our verbal definitions) it will always remain consistent. (KE 60-1)

For contrast: Althusser's discussion of "the necessary and immanent inter-relationship of the problematic and one of its objects":

These new objects and problems are necessarily *invisible* in the field of the existing theory, because they are not objects of this theory, because they are *forbidden* by it – they are objects and problems necessarily without any necessary relations with the field of the visible as defined by this problematic. They are invisible because they are rejected in principle, repressed from the field of the visible: and that is why their fleeting presence in the field when it does occur (in very peculiar and symptomatic circumstances) *goes unperceived*, and becomes literary an undivulgeable absence – since the whole function of the field is not to see them, to forbid any sighting of them. (Reading 27)

As has already been discussed in our Introduction, this passage explicates "the blinded eye of the theoretical problematic's self-reflection", i.e., the "oversight" *structurally* embedded in an "uninformed" gaze of ideological theories – what Spinoza calls *imaginatio* – that is a pre-text for the "symptomatic reading".

What is immediately made clear by the above comparison and contrast is what Eliot's "theoretical problematic's self-reflection" in poetics as regards "Tradition" and the "individual talent" *does* and *does not* see. The comparison with Eliot's own earlier philosophizing amply shows the *metaphysical* foundation of his celebrated theory of "Tradition" – a metaphysic, in a nutshell, based on the dictum of his own: "The real is the organized" (KE 82).<sup>271</sup> The whole "profoundly dialectical" moment – a potentially

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<sup>271</sup> Cf. "Reality (we must repeat this) is not the sum of things. It is the unity in which all things,

*radical* moment to *transform* “the *whole* existing order” – is, in fact, based on this metaphysical assumption, or *problematic*, that the individual “shall *conform*” to the “ideal order”. The art-historical concept of “conformity between the old and the new” is, in other words, nothing but an application of probably the most idealistic moment in Eliot’s philosophy, in which “without the implication of a system in which it belongs the fact is not a fact at all” – Joachim’s influence is more than apparent here, and one may also sense a shadow of Bergson’s *Creative Evolution* in this “organic” development where the “character . . . may be said both to be already present at the moment of conception, and on the other hand to develop at every moment into something new and unforeseen” while “it will always remain consistent”. This last point is of utmost significance in our context: where Bergson sees actualization of the Virtual, or “differentiation” to use Deleuze’s term,<sup>272</sup> Eliot sees the actual (“already present”), essential (“will always remain consistent”) *character*, i.e., the “essential kinship”, always-already shared by “the old and the new”. What is also interesting here is that Eliot seems to recognize that such an “organic” perspective is necessarily selective and exclusive (“there is a fitness of the various facts for each other, with that instinctive selection and exclusion”) – *organic* representation (e.g., Philosophy) only subsists by exclusion of *orgiastic* representation (e.g., Poetry), so that, in turn, the latter may strike back at *any* time and *any* place.<sup>273</sup> Eliot was

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coming together, are transmuted, in which they are changed all alike, though not changed equally. And, as we have perceived, in this unity relations of isolation and hostility are affirmed and absorbed. These also are harmonious in the Whole, though not of course harmonious as such, and while severally confined to their natures as separate” (Bradley *Appearance* 432).

<sup>272</sup> Cf. “Why is differentiation an ‘actualization’? Because it presupposes a unity, a virtual primordial totality that is dissociated according to the lines of differentiation, but that still shows its subsisting unity and totality in each line. Thus, when life is divided into plant and animal, when the animal is divided into instinct and intelligence, each side of the division, each ramification, carries the whole with it. . . . Differentiation is always the actualization of a virtuality that persists across its actual divergent lines” (Deleuze *Bergsonism* 95).

<sup>273</sup> Cf. “When representation discovers the infinite within itself, it no longer appears as *organic* representation but as *orgiastic* representation: it discovers within itself the limits of the organised: tumult, restlessness and passion underneath apparent calm. It rediscovers monstrosity” (Deleuze *Difference* 42). R. P. Blackmur’s luminous concept of “Tory anarchy” (“Anni Mirabiles” *Primer* 13) is to be compared with the Deleuzean aesthetic.

perhaps only *feeling*, but not *knowing*, such a precarious implication involved in Theory, when he theorized the celebrated “objective correlative” and denounced *Hamlet*, conclusively and provocatively, as “artistic failure” thus:

Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in *excess* of the facts as they appear. . . . his mother is not an adequate equivalent for [his difficulty]; his disgust envelops and exceeds her. It is thus a feeling which he cannot objectify it, and it therefore remains to poison life and obstruct action. None of the possible actions can satisfy it; and nothing that Shakespeare can do with the plot can express Hamlet for him. And it must be noticed that the very nature of the *données* of the problem precludes objective equivalence.

(SW 101)

It may be no coincidence that we can find several Deleuzo-Spinozian terms, such as “adequate” and “envelop”, in this quotation, but we are, I am afraid, only repeating what we have discussed at length towards the end of our last chapter, namely, why and how Eliot abandoned Philosophy for Poetry. One point to note here is that the “organic” development of Eliot’s “Tradition” as well as “the system” posits “essential kinship” among its members, old and new, so that even the “really new” may safely be assimilated to the “ideal order”, that is to say, there should be nothing “really new” within this system, however dynamic (its logical equivalent is found in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*: “In logic nothing is accidental” (2.012)). Its contraposition is, then, *foreclosure* of the existence of *Whatever* beings, or *singularities* with *inessential* commonality – i.e., those who do not share this particular “essential kinship” (Wittgenstein again: “outside logic everything is accidental” (6.3)). But if they do exist at all (like “freethinking Jews” in Virginia), they must be purged, or at least mystified (finally: “There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical” (6.522)) – or, *insofar as* “they” keep away from “us”, one must tolerate them, as a benign cultural

relativist should do, by simply passing over their existence in silence.

Herein lies the significance of the contrast with the passage from Althusser, concerning the “new objects and problems” that are “necessarily *invisible* in the field of the existing theory” and also “necessarily without any necessary relations with the field of the visible as defined by this problematic”. These objects and problems are new – *radically* new – not because they are the assimilatable “outside” that brings about slight “modification” of the “ideal order” so as to revitalize it, but because they cannot even be recognized as “outside” – “the invisible is not therefore simply what is outside the visible (to return to the spatial metaphor), the outer darkness of exclusion – but the *inner darkness of exclusion*, inside the visible itself because defined by its structure” (Althusser *Reading* 27). Hence, what is involved is not “conformity between the old and the new” (i.e., “persistence” of the existing order), but “the ‘change of terrain’ on the exercise of vision, in which Marx pictures the transformation of the problematic” (i.e., “science”, or the “epistemological break” with the existing theory) – thus “we need an *informed* gaze, a new gaze” (28). In a sense, for both Eliot and Althusser, there is no outside – but for categorically different reasons. For Althusser, what appears outside is nothing but the effect of ideology – the Spinozian “triple illusions” – that condemns a thinking subject to the closed circle of the existing problematic (or *episteme*), and the “way out” is not found in naming the outside, but in the “symptomatic reading” of the presence of absence, an “absent *exteriority*”:

It is impossible to leave a closed space simply by taking up a position merely *outside it*, either in its exterior or its profundity: so long as this outside or profundity remain *its* outside or profundity, they still belong to *that* circle, to *that* closed space, as its ‘repetition’ in *its* other-than-itself. Not the repetition but the non-repetition of this space is the way out of this circle: the sole theoretically sound flight – which is precisely not a *flight*, which is always committed to what it is fleeing from, but the radical foundation of a new space, a new problematic

which allows the real *problem* to be posed, the problem misrecognized in the recognition structure in which it is ideologically posed. (*Reading* 57)

By standing *outside* or imagining to do so, one is still trapped *inside*. The Outside – “the last instance” as an “absent *exteriority*” – is never a give solution, but always-already “the real *problem* to be posed” that designates a “differential virtuality”.<sup>274</sup>

For Eliot, on the other hand, there is no outside, because what appears outside at first sight (the “really new”) is, in reality, nothing but the inside-in-disguise – or, more precisely, the inside-to-be, which certainly brings time, thus a certain kind of dynamism, into the “system”, and yet, in this dynamic system, performativity of the “really new” involves no subversion,<sup>275</sup> while, instead, the steady order of succession in time, with transitory, “ever so slight” alterations, is *a priori* secured – at least *theoretically*. What we get here is, then, the March of an ever-self-rejuvenating “Ideal Order” that assimilates, like Empire, the *outsider-turned-insider* newcomers on its way. One of the most illuminating literary *topoi* of such dynamism should doubtless be the site of translation, the “contact zone” between languages, as it were. In that respect, there is an interesting early review Eliot has contributed to *The Egoist* (“The Noh and the Image” (Aug. 1917)) – in fact, the second of his contributions<sup>276</sup> – in which he picks up *Noh, or Accomplishment: A Study of the*

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<sup>274</sup> Deleuze’s concept of the “Idea” as a problematic instance (*Difference* Ch.4, & passim) is illuminating here. It is no accident that Deleuze takes the Althusserian problematic of “the economic [*l’économique*]” for a “profoundly correct example” thereof: “Althusser and his collaborators are, therefore, profoundly correct in showing the presence of a genuine structure in *Capital*, and in rejecting historicist interpretations of Marxism, since this structure never acts transitively, following the order of succession in time; rather, it acts by incarnating its varieties in diverse societies and by accounting for the simultaneity of all the relations and terms which, each time and in each case, constitute the present: that is why ‘the economic’ is never given properly speaking, but rather designates a differential virtuality to be interpreted, always covered over by its forms of actualisation; a theme or ‘problematic’ always covered over by its cases of solution” (*Difference* 186).

<sup>275</sup> As for “performative subversions”, see Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble*.

<sup>276</sup> After he abandoned the doctoral degree and the promising career in the American academia, Eliot was still, at least publicly, more or less an active philosopher, writing two papers on Leibniz for the *Monist* and reviewing mostly for the *International Journal of Ethics* through the kind offices

*Classical Stage of Japan* by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound.<sup>277</sup> After usual introduction of the book to be reviewed in the first paragraph, Eliot commences the second paragraph by a quasi-philosophical, generalizing statement – already characteristic of his style of critical prose that is to become a kind of trademark<sup>278</sup> – as follows:

Translation is valuable by a double power of fertilizing a literature: by importing new elements which may be assimilated, and by restoring the essentials which have been forgotten in traditional literary method. There occurs, in the process, a happy fusion between the spirit of the original and the mind of the translator; the result is not exoticism but rejuvenation. (“Noh” 102)

This short passage is probably the earliest manifestation, albeit embryonic, of Eliot’s concept of “Tradition”, that is to say, “rejuvenation” of one’s own “Tradition” (inside) by

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of Bertrand Russell, until early 1917. In June 1917 (in May, according to Schuchard *Dark* 39), Eliot was offered the job of assistant editor on the *Egoist* by Harriet Shaw Weaver (by Pound’s instigation), to which he began to contribute regularly. This same month also saw *Prufrock and Other Observations* published by the *Egoist* Press. This was indeed the memorable month of commencement for Eliot’s life-long involvement in literary journalism as editor, reviewer, and poet. His first contribution is on the *Letters of John Butler Yeats* (July), next on the *Noh* translation (Aug.), and then the three installments of “Reflections on Contemporary Poetry” (Sept. ~ Nov.), which series are his initial attempt at general Theory of Poetry that lead up to “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919). No wonder Eliot always believed, or made believe, that the celebrated “Tradition” essay was written in 1917.

<sup>277</sup> It is of great interest that Jacques Derrida regards the Fenollosa-Pound collaboration as “the first break in the most entrenched Western tradition” (*Grammatology* 92) at the close of Part I. John Harwood, citing this argument, insists that “[s]tructurally, the claim resembles Eliot’s ‘dissociation of sensibility’, except that instead of a bad break in the seventeenth century, we have an unprecedented disruption in the early twentieth” (*Eliot* 50), but such a facile association seems grievously misguided, for Derrida’s emphasis is, though Harwood conspicuously omits this part in his citation, clearly upon “a question of dislocating, through access to another system linking speech and writing, the founding categories of language and the grammar of the *epistémè*” (92), whereas Eliot sees the “essentials”. In short, Derrida sees the deconstructive moment of dislocation, much like de Man’s “permanent disjunction” below, where Eliot sees that of reconstruction or restoration of “the essentials” inherent in the existing order. It is clear that Eliot’s unity-dissociation-(re)unity scheme is exactly what Derrida successfully deconstructs, so I would rather insist, *pace* Harwood, that it is the very *structure* of their readings that differs.

<sup>278</sup> Louis Menand’s *Discovering Modernism* provides us with a stimulating discussion of Eliot’s style from the perspective of “professionalism”.



virtue of “assimilat[ing]” the “really new” through translation (outsider-turned-insider), which does not effect any kind of *critical* subversion but rather “a happy fusion” that somehow “restor[es] the essentials”. It is highly significant, indeed pertinent to our context, that Eliot’s “Tradition” has earlier, if not originally,<sup>279</sup> been conceived through meditation on the use of translation, or the *taming* of the “contact zone”. And, I believe, its significance would be illuminated by comparison and contrast with Walter Benjamin’s “The Task of the Translator” (1921), whose extraordinary ideas are found in embryo in his earlier “On Language as Such and on the Language of Man” (1916) – a curiously contemporaneous development of thought.<sup>280</sup>

Benjamin quotes, near the end of this essay (which was originally meant to preface his own translation of Baudelaire), Rudolf Pannwitz (a disciple of Stefan George<sup>281</sup>) favorably:

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<sup>279</sup> Perhaps the very first conceptualization of “Tradition” can be identified in the following statement in “Reflections on *Vers Libre*” (*New Statesman* (March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1917)): “The novelty meets with neglect; neglect provokes attack; and attack demands a theory. In an ideal state of society one might imagine the good New growing naturally out of the good Old, without the need for polemic and theory; this would be a society with a living tradition. In a sluggish society, as actual societies are, tradition is ever lapsing into superstition, and the violent stimulus of novelty is required” (*SP* 32). This is, in a sense, a negative, or revolutionary, definition of “Tradition”, but it is of great significance that even such a provocative statement is based on the fundamentally conservative assumption of an organic “living tradition” that is now extant but did (and shall) exist.

<sup>280</sup> It is perhaps a matter of more than just biographical curiosity that Benjamin is the first German translator of St. John Perse’s *Anabasis*, commissioned by Hofmannsthal in 1925. Eliot began his English translation of the same poem in 1928.

<sup>281</sup> Paul de Man, in his reading of “The Task of the Translator”, points out the presence of George in the text to the effect that it was written in an atmosphere “in which the notion of the poetic as the sacred, as the language of the sacred, the figure of the poet as somehow a sacred figure, is common, and is frequent” (*Resistance* 77). De Man’s reading of the English and French translators’ reading of Benjamin’s essay is indeed exemplary of the kind of “symptomatic reading” with which we have tasked ourselves in this thesis. Read, for instance, de Man’s following comment on Gandillac’s sheer mistranslation: “As you come upon it in a text, the statement [by Benjamin] is so surprising, goes so much against common sense, that an intelligent, learned, and careful translator cannot see it, cannot see what Benjamin says. It is remarkable” (*Resistance* 81). De Man, in passing, offers a “more or less” tautological reading of the title word “*Aufgabe*, task,” which “can also mean the one who has to give up”, so that the “translator has to give up in relation to the task of refinding what was there in the original” (80) – which seems to correspond nicely to our meditations on *misreadability* in the Introduction above.

The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue. Particularly when translating from a language very remote from his own, he must go back to the primal elements of language itself and penetrate to the point where work, image, and tone converge. He must expand and deepen his language by means of the foreign language. It is not generally realized to what extent this is possible, to what extent any language can be transformed, how language differs from language almost the way dialect differs from dialect. (*Selected I* 262)

At first sight, this passage concerning the use of translation that “expand[s] and deepen[s] his language” appears to carry a similar thesis to Eliot’s, but when it comes to “the primal elements of language itself”, Benjamin differs from Eliot categorically in the philosophy of Language and, by extension, that of History. For Eliot, the “new elements” imported from a foreign language through translation are, just like “facts” in his doctoral dissertation and the “really new” in “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, something that “may be assimilated” so as to “rejuvenat[e]” one’s own “Tradition” by “restoring the essentials” – in other words, those “new elements” from outside are always-already vested with *essential kinship* with “the *whole* existing order” that is “Tradition”. For Benjamin, on the other hand, there is no such thing as “the essentials” of a self-identical language, since the existing languages are nothing but “fragments of a vessel that are to be glued together”, “fragments of a greater language” (260), i.e., the “pure language” [“die reine Sprache”], so that, whatever “kinship” there may be,<sup>282</sup> it is certainly not between the common *essences* of two self-identical languages, but only between their acts of *intention* – each singular and supplementing each other – towards the Virtual Whole:

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<sup>282</sup> Carol Jacobs aptly terms “kinship as differentiation”: “This explains why kinship may only be defined negatively. The kinship between languages generates their *difference*: on what basis could translation claim to duplicate the original if no language, however original, in turn guarantees the objective reality of that which it names?” (*Language* 81).

If the kinship [Verwandtschaft] of languages manifests itself in translations, this is not accomplished through the vague resemblance a copy bears to the original. It stands to reason that resemblance does not necessarily appear where there is kinship. The concept of “kinship” [Abstammung] as used here is in accord with its more restricted usage: it cannot be defined adequately by an identity of origin between the two cases, although in defining the more restricted usage the concept of “origin” [Abstammungsbegriff] remains indispensable. Where should one look to show the kinship of two languages, setting aside any historical connection? Certainly not in the similarity between works of literature or in the words they use. Rather, all suprahistorical kinship between languages consists in this: in every one of them as a whole, one and the same thing is meant. Yet this one thing is achievable not by any single language but only by the totality [Allheit] of their intentions supplementing one another: the pure language. (*Selected I* 256-7)

Hence, the “task of the translator” is not to “restor[e] the essentials” of the existing order and thus “rejuvenat[e]” it constantly by “assimilat[ing]” the outsider-turned-insider particulars that are, albeit foreign, “essentially akin”; but to “release [erlösen] in his own language that pure language which is exiled among alien tongues, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work”, so that “[f]or the sake of the pure language, he breaks through decayed barriers of his own language” (*Selected I* 261). If there is any “essence” in Benjamin’s scheme, it certainly does not belong to individual languages, but is vouchsafed by the “pure language”, the Virtual Whole. If Eliot had ever read this essay by Benjamin in philosophy of Language, he would no doubt have found *la grosse difficulté*, in that “*toute existence ne coïncide pas avec son essence*”.

The difference is, in short, that between the *molar* and *molecular* points of view as regards the existing (national or racial) languages. From Eliot’s *molar* viewpoint, English, like “Tradition”, forms “an ideal order”, so that “[t]he [whole] existing order is complete before the new work arrives”. It is therefore possible for him to end his review of the Noh

translations by citing the “cricket song” of “the ghost lovers”,<sup>283</sup> paralleled with “any lovers of Webster or Ford”, so as to conclude: “it is certainly English, and it is certainly new in English” (“Noh” 103) – a new, but essentially akin, member of the molar (i.e., totalizing) *whole* of English. Benjamin’s vision is, on the other hand, properly called *molecular*, in that the translator (or the critic) “breaks through decayed barriers of his own language” in order to rescue “the pure language” – “exiled among alien tongues” – just as “[f]ragments of a vessel that are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details”, that is to say, the act of *molecular* (i.e., *singular*) disintegration of the *molar* unity such as national languages will lead to a “closer contact” with the Universal.

Paul de Man’s ingenious reading of the same Benjamin text – or, rather, his “symptomatic reading” of the translators’ misreadings of the text – illustrates the point most clearly. De Man criticizes the English translator, Harry Zohn, for making “this difficult passage very clear”, so that he “in the process of making it clear made it say something completely different” (*Resistance* 90). De Man compares Zohn’s translation above with Carol Jacobs’ “much better” one (“fragments of a vessel, in order to be articulated together, must follow one another in the smallest detail” (Jacobs “Monstrosity” 762; *Language* 84)), and argues:

We have a metonymic, a successive pattern, in which things follow, rather than a metaphorical unifying pattern in which things become one by resemblance. They

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<sup>283</sup> The “cricket song” Eliot quotes at the end of his review reads in the Fenollosa translation: “Kiri, hatari, cho, cho, / Kiri, hatari, cho, cho, / The cricket sews on at his old rags, / With all the new grass in the field ; sho, / Churr, isho, like the whirr of a loom : churr”. Although Eliot does not specify from which Noh text he quotes, it is undoubtedly the last dance of *Shite* in *Matsumushi*. In the original text, the former monologue part means: “So elegant are the chirps of pine crickets in the grass, like the sound of a loom”. The latter onomatopoeic / punning part sounds: “kiriatarichoo, kiriatarichoo, tsudzurisasechoo”. It can be also noted that these “ghost lovers” are, though Eliot does not mention the fact, two male swains. One wanders away, allured by the chirps of crickets, and the other, having found his friend dead on the grass, “dies of love”. This *homerothic* tragedy must certainly have reminded Eliot of Jean Verdenal, who had been killed in the Dardanelles some two years before this review was written. This should, I submit, add another evidence to James E. Miller, Jr.’s “homosexual reading” in *T. S. Eliot’s Personal Waste Land*.

do not match each other, they follow each other; they are already metonyms and not metaphors; as such they are certainly less working toward a convincing tropological totalization than if we use the term ‘match’. . . . What we have here is an initial fragmentation; any work is totally fragmented in relation to this *reine Sprache*, with which it has nothing in common, and every translation is totally fragmented in relation to the original. The translation is the fragment of a fragment, is breaking the fragment – so the vessel keeps breaking, constantly – and never reconstitutes it; there was no vessel in the first place, or we have no knowledge of this vessel, or no awareness, no access to it, so for all intents and purposes there has never been one. (*Resistance* 90-91)

“Tradition”, viewed from the “contact zone” of translation, may form either “a metonymic, a successive pattern, in which things follow” (Benjamin’s “fragments of a vessel” as well as Deleuze’s *série*) or “a metaphorical unifying pattern in which things become one by resemblance” (Eliot’s “ideal order” as well as the recurrent “comme” in Baudelaire’s “Correspondances”<sup>284</sup>). In the former scheme, “the vessel keeps breaking, constantly – never reconstitutes it” (i.e., *molecular*), whereas, in the latter, “for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted” (i.e., *molar*). That “there was no vessel in the first place” entails that the Whole (i.e., “*die reine Sprache*”) is *virtual*, so that the former scheme may *critically* ward off the lures of any

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<sup>284</sup> “The transcendence of substitutive, analogical tropes linked by the recurrent “comme,” a transcendence which occurs in the declarative assurance of the first quatrain [of Baudelaire’s “Correspondances”], states the totalizing power of metaphor as it moves from analogy to identity, from simile to symbol and to a higher order of truth” (de Man *Rhetoric* 248). This reading of “Correspondances” is, of course, *supplemented* – indeed, “a dangerous supplement” – by that of “Obsession”, which, according to de Man, “can be called a *reading* of the earlier text, with all the complications that are inherent in this term” (252): “‘Obsession’ translates ‘Correspondances’ into intelligibility, the least one can hope for in a successful reading. . . . the temporal pattern of obsessive thought is directly reminiscent of the tautological, enumerative stutter we encountered in the double semantic function of ‘comme,’ which disrupts the totalizing claim of metaphor in ‘Correspondances’” (259). For my own attempt to read *The Waste Land* by virtue of the similar problematic, see “*The Waste Land* stutters . . .”.

“convincing tropological totalization” – a prominent example of such “totalization” is, indeed, “the *whole* existing order” of Eliot’s “Tradition” that “is complete before the new work arrives”.

### **“the benefits of transplantation”**

In order to illustrate the above Benjaminian displacement – “to put the original in motion, to de-canonize the original, giving it a movement which is a movement of disintegration, of fragmentation” – de Man gives us a fine metaphor (*Übersetzung, transport*) of “a kind of permanent exile”:

This movement of the original is a wandering, an *errance*, a kind of permanent exile if you wish, but it is not really an exile, for there is no homeland, nothing from which one has been exiled. Least of all is there something like a *reine Sprache*, a pure language, which does not exist except as a permanent disjunction which inhabits all languages as such, including and especially the language one calls one’s own. What is to be one’s own language is the most displaced, the most alienated of all. (*Resistance* 92)

It is no accident, I presume, that the way de Man describes “a kind of permanent exile” as “not really an exile, for . . . nothing from which one has been exiled” is strikingly similar to Althusser’s above-cited description of “the sole theoretically sound flight” as that “which is precisely not a *flight*, which is always committed to what it is fleeing from” (*Reading* 57). Here meet the two comparisons above: Eliot and Althusser would agree that there is no outside, but Eliot sees the “really new” as the *outsider-turned-insider*, where Althusser sees “a theoretical lapse, absence, lack” as a *symptom* of an “absent exteriority”; Eliot and Benjamin would agree that translation should “expand and deepen his language by means

of the foreign language”, but Eliot regards translation as a fertilizer of the existing (national or racial) language by means of “restoring” or “rejuvenating” the substantial “essentials” inherent in each language tradition, while Benjamin finds in “translatability” among the “alien tongues” (every one of which is nothing but a fragment) the faintest hope of “releasing” the “pure language”; and so, after all, it is Althusser and Benjamin, and not Eliot the Philosopher, who agree that the Whole is the Virtual – “*l’économique*”, “*die reine Sprache*”, or whatever name Spinoza’s God assumes – so that it does not exist, to adopt de Man’s superb phrases above with slight alterations, except as a permanent disjunction which inhabits every *existing* order that posits itself as a *whole/mole*, e.g. Race, Nation, Empire, etc. – those are, in *reality*, the most displaced, the most alienated of all. In that sense, “a kind of permanent exile” is indeed a most apt metaphor, or *image*, of the Virtual Whole and also of its rare *actualization* in the *figures* (persons as well as texts) of such critics as Walter Benjamin, Paul de Man, and Edward Said among others.

One might as well presume that the American exile in London who abandoned his promising career as philosopher back at Harvard and began his career as editor, reviewer, and poet in literary London (while earning his and his wife’s bread at Lloyd’s Bank in the City<sup>285</sup>) in 1917 or so should be counted as such another. Eliot is, in fact, the prime example of the use and abuse of Saidian “affiliation” (*World* 16-19), and his name even appears at the very beginning and the very ending of *Culture and Imperialism*,<sup>286</sup> a primer

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<sup>285</sup> Cf. In his contribution to *The Little Review*, another important organ for his literary outlet, in May 1917, Eliot made his avatar Ealdrop say, “I am, I confess to you, in private life, a bank-clerk. . . .” (“Ealdrop and Appleplex [I]” 11).

<sup>286</sup> Said’s very first quotation in *Culture and Imperialism* is from “Tradition and the Individual Talent” and the very last from “Burnt Norton”. The latter is particularly impressive: “No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things; in Eliot’s phrase, reality cannot be deprived of the ‘other echoes [that] inhabit the garden’” (*Culture* 336). It is as if Said were saying, “Yes, Eliot the Philosopher is right to *see* the persistence of Tradition, but we must go beyond that Eliot by listening to Eliot the Poet, who, even in the post-conversion, reactionary phase, could still *hear* the ‘other echoes [that] inhabit the garden’” – “a permanent disjunction which inhabits all languages as such”.

for the criticism as a kind of permanent exile. Indeed, it is obvious that Eliot at that time began consciously examining and exploiting “the immense advantage of being outsiders”,<sup>287</sup> while making quite acerbic and sometimes even hilarious assaults upon the native “traditions” of contemporary poetry, British or otherwise. After “The Noh and the Image” (Aug.), he contributed three “Reflections on Contemporary Poetry” (Sept. ~ Nov.), which clearly show the acerbic and provocative (even “revolutionary”) side of young Eliot<sup>288</sup> – interestingly enough, the fourth and final installment of the series, which is by far the most *theoretical* and somewhat gloomy with the “historical sense” rather than with acerbity and hilarity (we will return to this piece in our Conclusion below), was to come after the “break” of almost 2 years – and then his next two contributions to *The Egoist* were on Turgenev (Dec.) and on Henry James (Jan. 1918), two prominent precedent artists in exile.

“The cosmopolitan is not a popular type” – thus begins Eliot’s review of *Turgenev* by Edward Garnett (with a forward by Josef Conrad) in the December-1917 issue of *The Egoist* – still during the Great War, in which everyone seemed nationalist, except the Russian Bolshevik rebels who had just seized power in the October Revolution, showing to

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<sup>287</sup> Conrad Aiken, who stayed in London in the winter of 1921-22, recalls the conversations with Eliot: “of course, we discussed the literary scene, with some acerbity and hilarity, and with the immense advantage of being outsiders (though both of us were already contributing to the English reviews)” (“Anatomy” 194). It should also be noted that Eliot’s frequent correspondences with his father and mother during 1917-18 clearly shows that he was desperately trying to persuade his parents *and himself* that his decision to stay in England was indeed right. In a sense, Eliot was “cheering himself up” by praising such forerunners as Turgenev and Henry James.

<sup>288</sup> See, for instance, the following statement in the third installment: “Certainly if a spontaneous revolution is possible, if it is possible for a whole generation, and not merely an isolated individual here and there, to arise as one as is indeed the case, that the various volunteers should variously armed” (151). Compare with the above-quoted statement earlier in the same year (“Reflections on *Vers Libre*” (*New Statesman* (March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1917)): “The novelty meets with neglect; neglect provokes attack; and attack demands a theory. In an ideal state of society one might imagine the good New growing naturally out of the good Old, without the need for polemic and theory; this would be a society with a living tradition. In a sluggish society, as actual societies are, tradition is ever lapsing into superstition, and the violent stimulus of novelty is required” (*SP* 32). Mark here that this was the year of the Russian Revolution and that the Pound cohort were nicknamed “literary Bolsheviks”.



the world an imminent cosmopolitan alternative to the wartime nationalisms. Eliot first characterizes Turgenev as “much more cosmopolitan than Goethe” and also as “the least exploited of the Russian novelists” (167) – a regular reader of *The Egoist* would no doubt expect from this new reviewer some acerbic and hilarious words of criticism to follow<sup>289</sup> – but, to their surprise, this review turns out to be an outright praise, though not so much of the book reviewed as of Turgenev himself, with a generalizing, hence theoretical, comments on the issue of the Turgenev-type “cosmopolitan”:

Turgenev was, in fact, a perfect example of the benefits of transplantation; there was nothing lost by it; he understood at once how to take Paris, how to make use of it. A position which for a smaller man may be merely a compromise, or a means of disappearance, was for Turgenev (who knew how to maintain the rôle of foreigner with integrity) a source of authority, in addressing either Russian or European; authority but also isolation. He has a position which he literally made for himself, and indeed almost may be said to have invented. It is not a position of popular appeal, as he neither aped French writing nor exploited the Russian backwater. (“Turgenev” 167)

Here, we can immediately recognize a kind of self-portrait – perhaps, more precisely, still a rôle model – in which Eliot’s ambition and anxiety may be heard (“authority but also isolation”) as well as self-restraint (neither aping English writing nor exploiting the

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<sup>289</sup> In fact, Eliot’s previous piece had upset one reader, who appeared to be a liberal, feminist, poetry-loving, decent woman in the suburbs and regular reader even before the journal changed its name from *The New Freewoman*. She writes in “Correspondence” of the same December issue: “I have, I pride myself, kept abreast of the times in literature; at least, if I have not, the times have moved very speedily indeed. I was therefore surprised, in what was otherwise an intelligent review [“Reflections on Contemporary Poetry [III]”], to find Rupert Brooke dismissed abruptly with the words ‘He is not absent’ . . .” (165). The fact that this “reader’s letter” was, according to the editors of T. S. Eliot’s *Letters* (236; fn. 1), written by Eliot himself as a “filler” makes it doubly interesting, in that Eliot was then very conscious of what he was expected to do and what kind of impressions his reviews were giving upon those ordinary readers who would probably never realize that “the times in literature” was indeed “mov[ing] very speedily indeed” in the hands of Eliot and his cohorts.

American backwater). In what follows, Eliot throws in several dubious terms such as “racial”, “universal sameness” and “the uniformity of human nature”:

[Turgenev] recognized, in practice at least, that a writer’s art must be racial – which means, in plain words, that it must be based on the accumulated sensations of the first twenty-one years. But he combined in the highest degree the insight into the universal sameness of men and women with appreciation of the importance of their superficial variations. He saw these variations – the Russian variations – as the artist and not as the showman.

This grasp on the uniformity of human nature and this interest in its variations made Turgenev cosmopolitan and made him a critic. He did not acquire these two qualities in Paris, he brought them with him. (*ibid.*)

Eliot uses “racial”, instead of “national”, probably because Turgenev is a Russian – a gray zone between European civilization (*humanitas*) and Asian barbarity (*anthropos*) – meaning no more than “native” as in the following essay on Henry James, so we should not overemphasize the kind of racist ideology that Eliot is to hold clearly 20 years later.<sup>290</sup> Rather, it seems more important to confirm that “the benefits of transplantation”, just like the use of translation, is another variation of the rejuvenating process of the *whole* existing order by virtue of the outsider-turned-insider, this time with emphasis more upon “the individual talent” (Particular) than upon “Tradition” (General). These two essays together form, in a sense, both ends of a spectrum of Eliot’s *ethology* of reading, vacillating on the Particular-General Axis – although we must add that “the universal sameness of men and

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<sup>290</sup> As already cited above, Eliot’s commentary in *Criterion* (Oct. 1937) is certainly racist (racism beyond nationalism) and precariously close to the Nazi ideology on the rise: “Perhaps modern art is international, and if so, that may help to account for its weakness. I cannot think of art as either national or international – these, after all, are modern terms – but as racial and local; and an art which is not representative of a particular people, but ‘international’, or an art which does not represent a particular civilization, but only an abstract civilization-in-general, may lose its source of vitality” (82)

women” seems rather *in excess* and potentially, or *performatively*, subversive.<sup>291</sup> Towards the end of this review essay, Turgenev’s “peculiarly critical genius” is described, in fact, as an ability to turn the concrete particular (“concretions of Russian provincialism”) into the concrete general (“general human types . . . [which] are never unreal or abstract, but simply the essential”), and, finally, Eliot wonders whether “the method of Turgenev – this perfect proportion, this vigilant but never theoretic intelligence, this austere art of omission – is not that which in the end proves most satisfying to the civilized mind” (*ibid.*).

Eliot’s next contribution to *The Egoist* (Jan. 1918) is “In Memory of Henry James”, a lead-off article not in the form of a review but of a rather belated obituary. Its continuity with the previous Turgenev article is more than obvious: their “critical genius” and “the benefits of [their] transplantation”. Just as he has praised “Turgenev’s peculiarly critical genius” or “vigilant but never theoretic intelligence”, Eliot describes Henry James as a creator-cum-critic, giving a new meaning to the word “critic”:

As a critic, no novelist in our language can approach James; there is not even any large part of the reading public which knows what the word “critic” means. (The usual definition of a critic is a writer who cannot “create” – perhaps a reviewer of books). James was emphatically not a successful *literary* critic. His criticism of books and writers is feeble. . . . He was a critic who preyed not upon ideas, but upon living beings. It is criticism which is in a very high sense creative.

(1-2)

The concept of “ideas” as opposed to “living things” is rather interesting. As it was, in the case of Turgenev, an ability to turn the concrete particular (“concretions of Russian provincialism”) into the concrete general (“general human types . . . [which] are never unreal or abstract, but simply the essential”) that made him a “peculiarly critical genius”, so

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<sup>291</sup> As for Butler’s conceptualization of Universality as performative, see the ensuing discussion on “Kokumin bungaku”.

it must be fair to read “ideas” here as something “unreal” and “abstract”, quite distinct from “the essential”. Eliot elaborates on the relation of “James’s critical genius” with “Ideas” thus:

James’s critical genius comes out most tellingly in his mastery over, his baffling escape from, Ideas; a mastery and an escape which are perhaps the last test of a superior intelligence. He had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it. Englishmen, with their uncritical admiration (in the present age) for France, like to refer to France as the Home of Ideas . . . (2)

It is not an escape from “emotion” and “personality”, but from “Ideas”, that provides James with “critical genius”. It may be useful to cite another use of the word “ideas” in another review (“Kipling Redivivus”, *Athenaeum* (9 May 1919)), in which, interesting enough, Eliot attributes “ideas” to Kipling’s “Empire” and contrasts it to Conrad’s “points of view, or ‘worlds’”: “we may be allowed to call Swinburne’s Liberty and Mr. Kipling’s Empire ‘ideas’. They are at least abstract, and not material which emotion can feed long upon. . . . some poets, like Shakespeare or Dante or Villon, and some novelists, like Mr. Conrad,<sup>292</sup> have, in contrast to ideas or concepts, points of view, or ‘worlds’ – what are incorrectly called ‘philosophies’” (298). This is certainly not a political or even ethical critique of Kipling’s Imperialism,<sup>293</sup> but a specifically *artistic* critique, in which its target is “ideas” that are “abstract, and not material” – here again, concreteness and rooted-ness of experience seems the key factor, which is, in fact, along exactly the same line with his

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<sup>292</sup> One may legitimately surmise that Eliot, an avid reader of Conrad, has here in mind the now famous speech by Marlow: “The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it, not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to. . . .” (*Heart* 10). It is likely that Eliot, also a great lover of Kipling ever since his childhood, finds a critique of Kiplingian Imperialism in this passage. See also Said *Culture* 68f.

<sup>293</sup> As for Eliot’s reading and rereading of Kipling and its ideological significance, see my “Re-reading / T. S. Eliot”.

critique of Romanticism as well as Georgian poetry. In short, just as you must escape from “personality” without concrete experience (abstract particularity), so must you also escape from “ideas” that are uprooted from concrete “points of view” or “worlds” (abstract generality). Besides, Eliot’s critique of “Englishmen” that follows in the same paragraph shows an embryonic form of another celebrated theory concerning “dissociation of sensibility” (i.e., “falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other”):

In England ideas run wild and pasture on the emotions; instead of thinking with our feelings (a very different thing) we corrupt our feelings with ideas; we produce the political, the emotional idea, evading sensation and thought. George Meredith (the disciple of Carlyle) was fertile in ideas; his epigrams are a facile substitute for observation and inference. Mr. Chesterton’s brain swarms with ideas; I see no evidence that it thinks. James in his novels is like the best French critics in maintaining a point of view, a view-point untouched by the parasite idea. He is the most intelligent man of his generation. (“Memory” 2)

“Ideas” are abstract and parasitic, whereas James’s and Turgenev’s “critical genius” (i.e., “superior intelligence”) lies in their “points of view” rooted in concrete experience.

So far, however, this clear, albeit embryonic, criterion of aesthetic judgments has no logical connection with “the benefits of transplantation”, although, symptomatically enough, the author’s identification vacillates, even within one paragraph, from “Englishmen, with *their* uncritical admiration . . .” to “In England . . . *we* corrupt *our* feelings with ideas”. Therefore, Eliot needs to insert “probably” in the opening sentence of the immediately following paragraph:

The fact of being everywhere a foreigner was *probably* an assistance to his native wit. . . . There are advantages, indeed, in coming from a large flat country which no one wants to visit: advantages which both Turgenev and James enjoyed.

These advantages have not won them recognition. Europeans have preferred to take their notion of the Russian from Dostoevski and their notion of the American from, let us say, Frank Norris if not O. Henry. Thus, they fail to note that there are many kinds of their fellow-countrymen, and that most of these kinds, similarly to the kinds of their fellow-countrymen, are stupid; likewise with Americans. Americans also have encouraged this fiction of a general type, a formula or idea, usually the predaceous square-jawed or thin-lipped. . . . (*ibid.*; my emphasis)

This first sentence (“The fact of being everywhere a foreigner was probably an assistance to his native wit”) would probably have provided Said with an apt epigraph, like the words of Hugo of St. Victor, though perhaps he might have had issues with the expression, “native wit”. But aptness here is not simply due to its suave phrasing, but lies indeed in the way in which Eliot talks of the “benefits of transplantation” not as gaining “recognition” on both sides but as keeping, willy-nilly, *resistant* to such recognition, hence *critical*. That is to say, a foreigner with “critical genius” (“who knew how to maintain the rôle of foreigner with integrity”, i.e., a solid “third point of view”<sup>294</sup>) traverses the boundaries between, say, Europe and America so that s/he may de-mystify or “break” with the “fiction of a general type, a formula or idea” that *both* sides have bilaterally encouraged in the “schema of configuration”, i.e., the “fiction of a general type, a formula or idea” engendered by the “essentially *imaginary* nature of the comparative framework”.<sup>295</sup> Read, for example, the

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<sup>294</sup> Read the following passage from Eliot’s doctoral thesis: “We are unable to say, however, that one point of view is right and the other wrong, for we thus imply an element of identity, or of identical reference; the assertion of one point of view against another must be made from a third point of view, which somehow contains the first and the second. And yet it must be noticed (for I see no way to avoid this hair-splitting) that it is only from the third point of view that the first two are therein contained” (KE 121).

<sup>295</sup> The “schema of configuration” (Notice here that it is “*co*-figuration” and not “*con*-figuration”) is a conceptual apparatus that Sakai Naoki has invented by refining Saidian “Orientalism” with reference to Kantian schematism and Lacanian “mirror image”. Read, for instance: “By the schema of configuration, I want to point out the essentially ‘imaginary’ nature of the comparative framework of Japan and the West, since the figure in configuration imaginary in the sense that it is a sensible image on the one hand, and practical in its ability to evoke one to act toward the future on the other. Thus, the figure invokes imagination by which desire for identity is produced, and is the

following passage from Said's *Representations of the Intellectual*:

Because the exile sees things both in terms of what has been left behind and what is actual here and now, there is a double perspective that never sees things in isolation. Every scene or situation in the new country necessarily draws on its counterpart in the old country. Intellectually this means that an idea or experience is always counter-posed with another, therefore making them both appear in a sometimes new and unpredictable light: from that juxtaposition one gets a better, perhaps even more universal idea of how to think, say, about a human rights issue in one situation by comparison with another.

(*Representations* 60)

Here, Said is talking mainly of Adorno as the “intellectual exile” *per excellence* – interestingly enough, Said first brings up a comparison with Bazarov in Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* – and, just as Eliot has spoken about “a source of authority, in addressing either Russian or European; authority but also isolation”, Said, too, cannot help mentioning the shadow of “bitter solitude” over “the pleasures of exile”:

What Adorno doesn't speak about are indeed the pleasures of exile, those different arrangements of living and eccentric angles of vision that it can sometimes afford, which enliven the intellectual's vocation, without perhaps alleviating every last anxiety or feeling of bitter solitude. So while it is true to say that exile is the

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central issue for the logic of imagination. We would remain ignorant of how the desire for identity precipitates in the history of Japanese thought unless the issue of the figure is taken into consideration. I would like to underline, however, that desire does not develop unilinearly toward a figure but deploys itself spatially in contrast with an other figure. In the desire to want to know ‘Japanese thought,’ not only Japan but also the West has to be figured out: Japan or the West have to be cofigured. The desire to identify either with Japan or the West is, therefore, invariably a mimetic one, so that the insistence on Japan's originality, for instance, would have to be mediated by the mimetic desire for the West. It goes without saying that, for the same reason, within the discipline of the history of Japanese thought – and, by extension, Japanese studies – the insistence on the West's uniqueness would, in turn, be a testimony to the students' disavowed desire to imitate what is expected of the West by the Japanese” (Sakai *Translation* 52).

condition that characterizes the intellectual as someone who stands as a marginal figure outside the comforts of privilege, power, being-at-homeness (so to speak), it is also very important to stress that that condition carries with it certain rewards and, yes, even privileges. (59)

Like the Saidian “intellectual exile” as well as the Benjamin-de Manian “translator”, the Turgenev-Jamesian foreigner with “critical genius” *lives* the very displacement, “a permanent disjunction which inhabits all languages as such, including and especially the language one calls one’s own” – a dangerous supplement to *both* sides. It is then not with mere acerbity or hilarity that Eliot ends his obituary to Henry James with an improperly ironic and indeed highly *critical* comment on the significance of this death for the people on *both* sides of the Atlantic: “Henry James’s death, if it had been more taken note of, should have given considerable relief ‘on both sides of the Atlantic,’ and cemented the Anglo-American Entente” (“Memory” 2) – Henry James died a year before the U. S. finally joined the Allies in the Great War in February 1917.

To sum up, the Turgenev-James type of foreigner, with rare combination of “critical genius” and “the benefits of transplantation”, deconstructs the received “Ideas” or “fiction of general type” (e.g., racial or national stereotypes) and, at times, even goes as far as to bring in the potentially subversive moment of “the universal sameness of men and women” combined in the highest degree with “appreciation of the importance of their superficial variations” – the moment, I submit, of what Étienne Balibar calls “*ideal universality*”, or “the subversive element which the philosophers called *negativity*”: “the *ideal universality* is *multiple* by nature – not in the sense of being ‘relative’, less than unconditional, bound to compromise, but, rather, in the sense of being always-already beyond any simple or ‘absolute’ unity, and therefore a permanent source of conflict” (*Politics* 173). In other words, the Turgenev-James type of displaced *singularities* are endowed with *potentialities* to appeal to the kind of *universality* that “makes the solution [i.e., the General under the



disguise of the Universal – “universalism” rather than “universality”<sup>296</sup>] explode like something abrupt, brutal and revolutionary” (Deleuze *Difference* 190).

We must, however, quickly add that, while Eliot may successfully deconstruct *certain* generalities, such as the national identity, through the *figures* of translation and transplantation, he does it in order to invent and/or restore another (greater) generality that shall, in turn, assimilate that which is *apparently* “really new” (i.e., the Outside) but, in *reality*, “simply the essential” (i.e., the insider-in-disguise). It is in this context that Eliot makes such a bold pronouncement as to the exclusive privilege of being an American in European metropolis – in the name of one of Henry James’ characters but no doubt as a self-image of his own:

It is the final perfection, the consummation of an American to become, not an Englishman, but a European – something which no born European, no person of any European nationality, can become. (“Memory” 1)

A generality (“any European nationality”) is not exploded by the Singular-Universal moment of, say, Humanity or Nature, but is, instead, simply *overcome* by another, greater generality (“a European”). This is not “a permanent disjunction”, but a transitional disjunction so as to achieve a new and *real* conjunction that is *essentially* organized as an “ideal order”. It is, after all, not the “Tradition” itself that is displaced, but its creative-cum-critical agent, whose privileged displacement is useful as a significant but not excessive difference, upon which the *whole* existing order, properly called the “Mind” of Europe in the Hegelian sense,<sup>297</sup> can feed so as to get itself moving forward, extending its

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<sup>296</sup> See my “Between Universalism and Universality: Scottish Enlightenment and *Kokumin Bungaku*”.

<sup>297</sup> Eliot’s copy of Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* is full of underlines and marginalia, among which is the sentence underlined: “Thought ought to govern spiritual reality” (Gordon *Imperfect* 63). Its context is the French Revolution, through which an “*intellectual principle* was thus discovered to serve as a basis for the State” and the “principle of the Freedom of the Will, therefore, asserted against existing Right” (465) – the birth of the secularized State and of the individual as its member.

territories. “The real is the organized” (KE 82) – Eliot’s covert Hegelian metaphysics has now found its proper, practical Subject in the subjunctive but never subversive couple of “the mind of Europe” and “the mind of the poet”, or “Tradition” and “the individual talent” – that is to say, the General and the Particular.

### Tradition and the metic talent

Eliot was in the habit of referring to such a privileged position of his as “Metoikos”.<sup>298</sup> “Metoikos”, or “metic” in English, is a resident alien in the Greek *polis*.<sup>299</sup> When an immigrant sojourned for more than a certain length of time, he was pronounced to be “metoikos” by the polis so that he might be taxed, while his political, social, and legal rights were limited and he was not even allowed to possess any real estate. Probably the most prominent *metoikos* is Aristotle the Stagirite in Athens, who was, however, unsympathetic or even exclusionist with the metics in theory (Cf. *Politics*, Bk.7, Ch.4; 1326b). Etymologically, “metoikos” is derived from “meta” + “oikos”, that is, a person in a “meta-“ relation to “oikos” (home, or home country), but, due to the semantic ambiguity of the prefix “meta-“, there are several different interpretations with regard to the exact meaning of the word “metoikos”. There is, for instance, a romanticized image of *metoikos* as a distinguished guest in a democratic society, the most famous example of which is Wilamowitz-Möllerndorff’s interpretation of “metoikos” as “Mitbewohner”, taking “meta-“

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The paragraph that contains the underlined sentence ends: “as if the reconciliation between the Divine and the Secular was now first accomplished” (466) – the moment in which the Universal was taken over by the General.

<sup>298</sup> As for Eliot’s pseudonym “Metoikos”, see Ackroyd *Eliot* 24-5; Crawford *Devolving* 220-234; Gross “Metoikos”; Johnson “Citizenship”; Williamson *Metoikos*.

<sup>299</sup> As for the Greek “metoikos”, see Kristeva *Strangers*; MacDowell “Oikos”; Miller *Nature*; Nussbaum *Fragility*; Pečírka “Aristotle’s”; Whitehead “Aristotle” and *Ideology*.

for “mit” in German.<sup>300</sup> On the other hand, Charles Maurras infamously insisted the Jews be removed from France, calling them “*métèques*” in the modern *polis*. In a more unbiased, “academic” interpretation, “meta-” is equaled to “trans-”, i.e., “change” of places or states of affairs, so that “*metoikos*” simply means “home-changer” – nothing more than “immigrant” in the neutral sense. In any case, thanks to the semantic ambiguity, the word “*metoikos*” can be *read* in various ways according to various interests. Likewise, we would rather *mis/read* this term quite liberally in what follows in order to draw a new map of “Tradition and the Metic Empires”.

Let us start with Eliot’s own use of the term in his letter to Mary Hutchinson, dated July 11<sup>th</sup> [?] 1919:

I don’t know whether I think you more complicated than you are – but I have fewer *delusions* about you than you think – but no doubt a great deal of *ignorance*. I certainly don’t recognise the portrait you hold up as painted by me. But remember that I am a *metic* – a foreigner, and that I *want* to understand you, and all the background and tradition of you. I shall try to be frank – because the attempt is so very much worthwhile with you – it is very difficult with me – both by inheritance and because of my very suspicious and cowardly disposition. But I may simply prove to be a savage. (*LI 379*; Eliot’s italics)

For Eliot, being a “metic”, or a newly-arrived participant in European civilization from the “savage” country, is related to the inevitable “*ignorance*” and incessant desire for knowledge of “you, and all the background and tradition of you”. In fact, this letter is particularly important, in that it displays a blueprint of “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, which Eliot is about to publish in *The Egoist* (Sept. ~ Dec.). Eliot explains to his friend the distinction between civilization and culture, in distinctively Eliotic terms, as follows:

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<sup>300</sup> “Somit darf es als erwiesen gelten, dass die Metoeken Klienten sind, aber nicht Klienten eines einzelnen Atheners, sondern des Volkes der Athener, als Mitbewohner Athens Mitpfleglinge Athenas, Quasibürger” (Wilamowitz-Möllendorff “Demokratika II” 246).

I think two things are wanted – civilisation which is impersonal, traditional (by ‘tradition’ I don’t mean stopping in the same place) and which forms people unconsciously – I don’t think two or half a dozen people can set out by themselves to be civilised – though one can insist on *not* relaxing what civilisation one has in favour of people who are incapable of appreciating it. I mean the ‘shouting and bad manners’ need not be tolerated – and culture – which is a personal interest and curiosity in *particular* things – I think it is largely the *historical sense*, which is not simply knowledge of history, but trains one to discriminate one’s own passions from objective criticism. (*LI* 378; Eliot’s italics)

It is perhaps unnecessary to elaborate in detail on all the elements in this passage that are to form the essential part of what is now celebrated or degraded as quintessentially Eliotic criticism: the “impersonal theory”, the dynamic “tradition”, the *historical sense*, discrimination of one’s own passions from “objective” criticism. However, one point of which we ought to take special note here is that such theorization of “tradition” and the “historical sense” is made from the *metic* perspective – i.e., the desire of a *metoikos* for Tradition, the desire to know “all the background and tradition” so as to *appropriate* the whole “tradition” that he himself has chosen, the desire of “affiliation” in the Saidian sense. Hence, it is not so much conservative in a *filiative* sense of *oikos* (Tradition “cannot be inherited, . . .”), as appropriative in an *affiliative* sense of *meta-oikos* (“ . . . and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour” (*SW* 49)). In that respect, we may paraphrase the above discussion as regards “the consummation of an American to become, not an Englishman, but a European” thus: In order to overcome a bigoted British traditionalism, or “nativism” (*oikos*, or a nation-state), Eliot the *metoikos* posits Europe as what may be called a *Meta-Oikos* (“*oikos* megas”, or Super-Nation – Eliot’s model is not the Soviet internationalism or transnational capitalism but the (Holy) Roman Empire<sup>301</sup>), so that he

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<sup>301</sup> Eliot writes to Ford Madox Ford (Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> 1923) in the open letter that is to be published in the inaugural issue of *Transatlantic Review* (Jan. 1924): “The present age, a singularly stupid one, is the

may trans-form (*meta-oikos* as *trans-home*) and appropriate “Tradition” as the *whole* existing order in such a way as to make it fit, and be fitted by, his own creative and critical works. In other words, the ambivalence of “metoikos” – the trans-formative (hence, potentially subversive) moment in *meta-oikos* and the con-formative (hence, assimilationist and imperialist) moment in *Meta-Oikos* – is indeed *constitutive* of Eliot’s idea of “Tradition”. Such a latent ambivalence of Eliot’s “Tradition”, or the idea of *metic* Empire, may indeed be regarded as another variation of the “double reading”.

The above “metic” letter to Hutchinson is dated “11? July 1919”. The first installment of “Tradition and the Individual Talent” is published in the September issue of the monthly *Egoist*, so it was perhaps written before Eliot set out for a three-week trip to France on August 9<sup>th</sup>.<sup>302</sup> This article is immediately preceded by “Reflections on Contemporary Poetry [IV]” (in the July issue of *The Egoist*), the fourth and final installment of the series after the interval of nearly two years. Meanwhile, Eliot has begun to contribute less to *The Egoist* and more to John Middleton Murry’s *Athenaeum*, although Eliot was unable to accept Murry’s enthusiastic offer of its assistant editorship.<sup>303</sup> Eliot

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age of a mistaken nationalism and of an equally mistaken and artificial internationalism. I am all for empires, especially the Austro-Hungarian empire, and I deplore the outburst of artificial nationalities, constituted like artificial genealogies for millionaires, all over the world. . . . Let us not have an indiscriminate mongrel mixture of socialist internationals, or of capitalist cosmopolitans, but a harmony of different functions” (*LII* 251-2). It goes without saying that, at the defeat in the Great War, Austro-Hungarian Empire was then already defunct, which fact makes this letter look clearly reactionary in the true sense of the word.

<sup>302</sup> “I am going to France, to the Dordogne, on Saturday, for three weeks” (Letter to Lytton Strachey, August 6<sup>th</sup> 1919; *LI* 388).

<sup>303</sup> Obviously, Eliot’s contribution to the *Athenaeum* is less destructive, more constructive than those he has contributed to *The Egoist* so far, probably owing to the difference of personality between Murry and Pound. As Eliot starts his regular contributions to the *Athenaeum*, his essays seem to be directed towards composition of a coherent collection, rather than some acerbic and hilarious individual reviews. In fact, Eliot explains to his father (Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>) and to his mother (Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>) about his plan to publish collected essays, while, at the same time, he begins to collect some of his early fragments under the title “He Do the Police in Different Voices” – 1919 is, indeed, a year of consolidation for Eliot as the poet-cum-critic. As for the characters of Murry and his *Athenaeum* and its significance for Eliot’s career as a literary reviewer, see Goldie *Critical* 34-49.

contributed “Was There a Scottish Literature?” to the August 1<sup>st</sup> issue of the *Athenaeum*, and, since it was a weekly, he must have written this review article some time in late July. In short, those minor texts concerned here – the “metic” letter, the “Scottish” review, and the fourth “Reflections” – are all written almost exactly at the same time and immediately precede by far the most famous “Tradition” essay, comprising, as it were, its *pre*-texts.

“Was There a Scottish Literature?” is a review of Gregory Smith’s *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence* (1919). To this rather provocative question in the title, Eliot’s answer is simply and emphatically No, as “Scottish literature lacks, in the first place, the continuity of the language”, and he even goes as far as to state, “We are quite at liberty to treat the Scots language as a dialect, as one of the several English dialects which gradually and inevitably amalgamated into one language”, where “[i]t was important as a dialect among the other English dialects”, so that it should properly be treated as “a provincial literature” that retains “its local peculiarities” better than other provinces (681). This is clearly an assimilationist view of national literature, and certainly “politically incorrect” in today’s multiculturalist standard. But such a suppressive opinion cannot be simply written off as an English bigotry, since Eliot is not English but an American *metoikos* in London, and, in fact, he even makes an analogy of “Edinburgh in 1800” to “Boston in America fifty years later” (where the Eliot family was indeed one of the key players) so as to illustrate “the importance of a provincial capital”, whose significance is, however, not permanent but merely “the matter of a moment” (*ibid.*). Instead of deploring the tragic fate of the demised Scottish language and literature, Eliot, in fact, congratulates the Scotsmen on not sticking to their independence but getting themselves successfully assimilated to English:

We may even conclude it to be an evidence of strength, rather than weakness, that the Scots language and the Scottish literature did not maintain a separate existence.

It is not always recognized how fierce and fatal is the struggle for existence between literatures. In this struggle there is great advantage to be won if forces not too disparate can be united. Scottish, throwing in its luck with English, has not only much greater chance of survival, but contributes important elements of strength to complete the English. (*ibid.*)

This (socio-historical) Darwinist view of “the struggle for existence between literatures” is, just like Samuel Huntington’s “The Clash of Civilizations”, a view from the hegemonic Subject of the World History (or *Meta-Oikos*), and does, as we will presently discuss with regard to Ch’oe Chaesŏ, provide the colonial elites with justification for their *collaboration* with – “throwing in [their] luck with” – the Empire. And, as the opening general statement of this review clearly reveals, such a view is fundamentally related to the forthcoming “Tradition and the Individual Talent”. Just as he is to insist, at the beginning of the “Tradition” essay, that “[mere] ‘tradition’ should be positively discouraged” while “Tradition is a matter of much wider significance” (SW 49), so he speaks here of “History”, distinguishing it from mere “history”, at the incipit:

We suppose that there is an English literature, and Professor Gregory Smith supposes that there is a Scottish literature. When we assume that a literature exists we assume a great deal: we suppose that there is one of the five or six (at most) great organic formations of history. We do not suppose merely “a history,” for there might be a history of Tamil literature; but a part of History, which for us is the history of Europe. We suppose not merely a corpus of writings in one language, but writings and writers between whom there is a tradition; and writers who are not merely connected by tradition in time, but who are related so as to be in the light of eternity contemporaneous, from a certain point of view cells in one body, Chaucer and Hardy. We suppose a mind which is not only the English mind of one period with its prejudices of politics and fashions of taste, but which is a greater, finer, more positive, more comprehensive mind than the mind of any period. And we suppose to each writer an importance which is not only

individual, but due to his place as a constituent of this mind. When we suppose that there is a literature, therefore, we suppose a good deal. (“Scottish” 680)

It is probably unnecessary to explicate the similarities we can find in the above passage with such celebrated terms as the “historical sense” or the “mind of Europe”, nor is it necessary to elaborate on the way in which Eliot’s idea of “Tradition” is deeply rooted in his view of “History”, or Huntington’s “Clash” *avant la lettre*, as composed of “the five or six (at most) great organic formations”. However, what is of particular note here in our context is that the celebrated “Tradition” has preliminarily been conceived as “History” in which individual talents “are related so as to be *in the light of eternity* contemporaneous” – here, the phrase “in the light of eternity” is no doubt translation of Spinoza’s “*sub specie aeternitatis*”, and will be turned into the (in)famous rhetorical phrase, “a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together” (SW 49). Although how consciously Eliot has employed this Spinozian term here is a matter of conjecture, it seems highly significant that Eliot *mis*/reads Spinozian “eternity” of every *singular* existence by virtue of God or Nature as its cause, and instead turns it into Hegelian “History”, assimilationist as well as progressive, viewed from the end-point of “History”, i.e., from the victor’s point of view – it is precisely in this Hegelian sense that Eliot’s use of the term “Mind” of Europe is utterly appropriate. It is, in passing, even possible that Eliot’s writing this passage may have coincided with his replacement of “Nature” by “History” in the “Gerontion” typescript. It is, after all, not the virtual *potentia* of eternal Nature (universality) but the actual *potestas* of several “great organic formations” of History (generalities) that seems to really count in Eliot’s “historical sense”.

Generalities disguised as universal (i.e., *universalism*) are categorically different from what Balibar calls “*ideal universality*”, in that they are only “‘relative’, less than unconditional, bound to compromise” (*Politics* 173). As they are conditioned, so must there be a certain *problematic* that conditions them, which does, in turn, necessarily involve



what Althusser calls “the *inner darkness of exclusion*” (*Reading* 27). In this review, the condition concerned is the “continuity of the language” (“in the long run we can see that the continuity of the language has been the strongest thing” (“Scottish” 680)) – typical of what may be called language-nationalism, or, more precisely, language-“imperial nationalism”.<sup>304</sup> Hence, in the name of the more general (i.e., more powerful) language that is English, assimilation of Scottish literature (and, by extension, annexation of Scotland in the name of the “Union”) is to be *culturally* (or *culturalistically*) justified:

A powerful literature, with a powerful capital, tends to attract and absorb all the drifting shreds of force about it. Up to a certain limit of dissimilarity, this fusion is of very great value. English and Scottish, probably English and Irish (if not prevented by political friction), are cognate enough for the union to be of value.

(681)

This passage reveals that there is a deeper layer of the “condition”, i.e., necessity of being “cognate enough”. With the etymological association of “cognate” with “genus” or “genetic” in mind, it should be perfectly legitimate for us to bring back the above discussion of “essential kinship” as deeply rooted in Eliot’s *ethology* of reading, and of the “inner darkness of exclusion” necessarily involved therein. Hence, symptomatically enough, Eliot, in the above passage, cannot help inserting a phrase of reservation, or

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<sup>304</sup> In the above-quoted open letter to the inaugural issue of the *Transatlantic Review*, in which Eliot declares his support for the already-defunct Austro-Hungarian Empire, Eliot posits “a genuine nationality” against the post-WWI “outburst of artificial nationalities” as well as “artificial internationalism”: “a genuine nationality depends upon the existence of a genuine literature, and you cannot have a nationality worth speaking of unless you have a national literature” (*LI* 251). And such language-nationalism is *necessarily* coextensive with language-“imperial nationalism”, in that any universalistic value-judgment, aesthetic or otherwise, that denies *singularities* of Whatever beings entails the survival of the more powerful = valuable, as Eliot declares in the same letter that the “number of languages worth writing in is very small, and it seems to [him] a waste of time to attempt to enlarge it” (*ibid.*). As for “the very relationship between the transcendental project of universal philosophy and imperial nationalism” (Sakai “Resistance” 194), see Sakai’s “Subject and Substratum” and Imperial Nationalism and the Comparative Perspective”.

exclusion – “Up to a certain limit of dissimilarity”. Then he goes on to finish the review:

The basis for one literature is one language. The danger of disintegration of English literature and language would arise if the same language were employed by peoples too remote (for geographical or other reasons) to be able to pool their differences in a common metropolis. The chances of its survival, as a language and a literature in the tradition of European civilization, would be diminished against such a concentrated force as the French. For France, of course, a different danger, real or apparent, has been announced, we believe in an intemperate and fanatical spirit, by such apostles of French culture as M. Maurras: the danger of attracting foreign forces which might be received without being digested. That is at present, we trust, not an imminent peril for Britain. (*ibid.*)

Covert references in this concluding passage are more than obvious: the “one language” as the “basis for one literature” is in danger of “disintegration”, or *adulteration*, due to its proliferation among those who are not “cognate enough”, that is to say, not “essentially akin”: “peoples too remote”, such as colonial Indians speaking English, or “foreign forces which might be received without being digested”, such as the Jews in France, whom Maurras calls “*métèques*” – a typical case of what Balibar theorizes as “neo-racism”.<sup>305</sup> An ambiguous place that the Irish occupies – despite Eliot’s emphasis on the purely “literary” criterion, he brings in politics in this particular case (“if not prevented by political friction”) – is also revealing as to arbitrariness of the demarcation that regulates the “inner

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<sup>305</sup> Cf. “In fact, what we see is a general displacement of the problematic. We now move from the theory of races or the struggle between the races in human history, whether based on biological or psychological principles, to a theory of ‘race relations’ within society, *which naturalizes not racial belonging but racist conduct*. From the logical point of view, differentialist racism is a meta-racism . . . you have to respect the ‘tolerance thresholds,’ maintain ‘cultural distances’ or, in other words, in accordance with the postulate that individuals are the exclusive heirs and bearers of a single culture, segregate collectivities (the best barrier in this regard still being national frontiers)” (“Neo-racism” 22-23). It is particularly pertinent that Balibar finds a significant moment of the epistemic shift to “neo-racism” in the “interwar period, another crisis era” that leads up to the “logical culmination in the Vichy regime’s contribution to the Hitlerian enterprise” (20-21).

darkness of exclusion”.<sup>306</sup> Meanwhile, History has eloquently proved, *pace* Eliot, that the chances for survival of both of these national literatures, especially English, are indeed maximized by those “peoples too remote” and “foreign forces”.

Such is the *ideologeme*,<sup>307</sup> latent in the celebrated “Tradition” essay of 1919 – Hegelian, expansionist and assimilationist (i.e., “imperialist”<sup>308</sup>), differentialist [= exclusionist] and culturalist [= essentialist] (i.e., “neo-racist”), and, philosophically speaking, Naturalist-turned-Historicist. We may, of course, expect to discover another *topos*, by virtue of “symptomatic reading”, of *resistance* to Theory, that is to say, eruption of “the deep anarchies” on the textual surface, or a *meta-oikos* moment embedded in the midst of the *Meta-Oikos* Theory – to which we will come back towards the end of our Conclusion in terms of the last of the above-mentioned pre-texts of the “Tradition” essay (“Reflections on Contemporary Poetry [IV]”), but, for the rest of this chapter, let us briefly look at the two *uncanny* cases in which this Theory travelled – all the way to *another* Empire in East Asia.

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<sup>306</sup> In fact, Eliot has contributed to the *Athenaeum* just one month earlier a review of *The Cutting of an Agate* by Yeats with a suggestive title, “A Foreign Mind”. In this review, emphasis is placed not on “political friction” but on the *essential* (i.e., racial) differences of the Irish mind “from ours”: “Mr. Yeats’s mind is . . . a mind in which perception of fact, and feeling and thinking are all a little different from ours” (552); “There is something of this crudity, and much of this egoism, about what is called Irish Literature” (553).

<sup>307</sup> Jameson’s term to describe the minimal units of ideology. Cf. “The ideologeme is an amphibious formation, whose essential structural characteristic may be described as its belief system, an abstract value, an opinion or prejudice – a conceptual or protonarrative, a kind of ultimate class fantasy about the ‘collective characters’ which are the classes in opposition” (*Political* 87).

<sup>308</sup> Frank Kermode famously began his T. S. Eliot Memorial Lectures at the University of Kent by stating: “Eliot was, in the special sense to which I shall hereafter limit the word, an imperialist” (*Classic* 15). I do agree with Kermode’s shrewd insight as to Eliot’s “neo-Dantean compromise between universalism and nationalism” (*ibid.*) – that is to say, the complicity between universalism (i.e., generality disguised as universality) and particularism (bound by “essential kinship”) in our context. However, Kermode’s take on this issue is rather too idealistic, in that, while its critique of the “mystique of Empire” is sharp and precise, he is blind to the “inner darkness of exclusion”, such as the material consequences of assimilationism and/or racial exclusionism, that is involved in such an idealistic view and that emerges sometimes patently (“Scottish”), sometimes latently (“Tradition”). In short, shrewdest as Kermode’s idealistic critique of Eliot’s idea[l] of Empire may be, it still belongs to the same *problematic* without the necessary *epistemological break*.

## Nishida Kitarō's *Meta-Oikos*

It is generally acknowledged that Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) is the greatest philosopher that modern Japan has ever produced. Even if one may object to that title, it should be hard to deny that Nishida is, to use the term coined by Foucault, the “founder of discursivity” (“Author” 114) in modern Japanese philosophy, in that he was the first to build the unique philosophical *system* of his own in a somewhat *forced* Japanese language by appropriating Western philosophy – from Aristotle to Bergson – in his own (often peculiar) way, “which made possible not only a certain number of analogies, but also (and equally important) a certain number of differences” (Foucault *ibid.*). In this respect, it is rather interesting that Kobayashi Hideo, arguably the greatest literary critic in modern Japan, famously described Nishida’s philosophy, already full-fledged, in 1939 as “a monstrous system that is not written in Japanese, still less in any foreign language” (“Scholars” 255; my translation). Kobayashi’s critique here is not so much of Nishida’s uniquely abstruse style of Japanese writing, but of the general “monstrosity” that the modern Japanese philosophical discourse has inevitably assumed as a result of the “tough struggles over how to weave the traditional Japanese or Asian thoughts into a Western-style system”, of which Nishida is so typical and indeed foundational that he is tragically doomed to burden himself with “exorbitantly morbid solitude” (*ibid.*). It is then quite natural that the target of Kobayashi’s critique turns out to be Nishida’s disciples – the second generation of the so-called “Kyoto School” – who were then actively engaged, philosophically as well as journalistically (i.e., *ideologically*), in Japan’s imperialist enterprises by giving various theoretical justifications to Japan’s “World-Historical mission” to counter the imperialist Anglo-Saxon hegemony by establishing the East Asian Empire in the name of “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”. Kobayashi regards Nishida’s case as “a tragedy performed by a man with the soul of a true thinker”, while scathingly denouncing those “epigones [who] do not inherit the soul” for merely “dispersing those

words that belong to no country's language, without understanding anything about the human nature" (*ibid.*). Immediately after the defeat and demise of the Japanese Empire (Nishida had died several months before Japan's unconditional surrender on August 15<sup>th</sup> 1945), Nishida's abstruse language was criticized, much like the case of Heidegger, as quintessentially fascistic, but as Japan was gradually growing out of the defeat to become a major economic power, the "apologists" in Japanese academia as well as in the West began to *orientalize* Nishida to fit the image of the Oriental Sage, or Zen Master. In short, Nishida's philosophy is, as Kobayashi's shrewd insight into its stylistic predicament has, in a sense, predicted, destined to be a *metic* philosophy that does not belong either to the East or to the West.

Nishida's political engagement during his last years – interpreted as overt "collaboration" by some; covert "resistance" by others – is one of the most controversial issues even to this day.<sup>309</sup> And yet, it is hardly mentioned that, during those later years, Nishida began to make frequent references to T. S. Eliot.<sup>310</sup> Although we are certainly not ready to dwell much on this large issue in general – in fact, one of the largest in the Japanese intellectual history – concerning Nishida's philosophy and its relationship (or kinship) with the Japanese Imperialist ideology, I believe that the following examination of Nishida's *mis/reading* of Eliot would, to a high degree, illuminate our thesis on the *ideologeme* of T. S. Eliot's "Tradition".

Before that, just a word on Nishida's philosophical discipline. There are, in my opinion, far too many scholarly works on "Nishida and Zen Buddhism", "Nishida and Neo-Confucian metaphysics", etc. and no less studies on "Nishida and Bergson", "Nishida

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<sup>309</sup> For a comprehensive overview in English of the "*Roshōmon-esque* nature of representing Nishida's politics", see Arisaka's "The Nishida Enigma". See also the concise update of the issue in Goto-Jones' "Introduction" to his *Political Philosophy in Japan*. The most comprehensive collection of essays on this issue (mostly by the "apologists") is *Rude Awakenings*, edited by James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo.

<sup>310</sup> For a comprehensive examination of Nishida's references to Eliot, see my "Empires of the *Metoikoi*", esp. 7-18.

and William James”, “Nishida and Hegel”, and all the big names in the rosters of Western philosophers. There is, however, too little attention to Anglo-American Absolute Idealism, which was no doubt the single most important element of the academic milieu in which early Nishida disciplined himself in Western philosophy. For instance, Nishida’s first scholarly publication is an article entitled “An Outline of [T. H.] Green’s Moral Philosophy”<sup>311</sup> (1895), and also the early entries of his diaries clearly show that he studied intensively the contemporary Anglo-American philosophers such as F. H. Bradley, Bernard Bosanquet and Josiah Royce, while he was teaching German at a local high school.<sup>312</sup> The highly probable influence of Bradley’s “immediate experience” upon Nishida’s “pure experience” ought to be acknowledged, while the pivotal role Royce’s “self-representative system” (developed in the “Supplementary Essay” to *The World and the Individual*) played in Nishida’s famous “leap” in 1926 at the “logic of *basho* [place]”, as Nishida himself acknowledged his debt, ought to be studied more seriously. In any case, it is, I maintain, safe to say that Nishida’s philosophical milieu in his formative years was very similar to Eliot’s, without, of course, knowing each other’s work at all, until Nishida “discovered” Eliot through his colleague at Kyoto Imperial University in the early 1930’s.

At the instigation of Ishida Kenji, Nishida’s colleague and Chair of English at Kyoto

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<sup>311</sup> Hirai Atsuko, in a rare full-article-size study of T. H. Green’s influence upon Nishida, rightly complains: “If the world is unaware of the importance of Green to Nishida, it may be because past research on this subject was fraught with elementary problems” (“Anglo-American” 20).

<sup>312</sup> E.g. “Logic can be interesting if you study it as Bradley does” (diary entry on Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> 1901; XVII 57). In fact, Nishida’s early notebooks are full of citations from Bradley, Royce, and others (XVI *passim*). In 1919, Nishida, who was then the Chair professor at Kyoto Imperial University, advised Tanabe Hajime, whom Nishida invited to join the Faculty that year, to read Bradley as well as Lotze, Sigwart, and Mill (after Aristotle and Hegel), calling, in passing, Bosanquet as “no more than an epigone of Bradley” (Letter to Tanabe Hajime, dated June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1919; XIX 361). As late as 1933, when Fukase Motohiro, a young T. S. Eliot scholar, visited Nishida and gave him a copy of his book on Eliot, “Prof. Nishida was very happy and talked of Hobbes and Bradley” (Fukase *Works* II 429). As for Royce, it is well-known, but not well-studied, that Nishida was so inspired by Royce’s “self-representative system” that he opened a new phase in his philosophy by establishing the “logic of *basho*” in 1926. Nishida has, in 1921, written in his preface to the Japanese translation of Royce’s *The Philosophy of Loyalty*: “In any case, I believe that Royce was the only true speculative thinker in America”.

Imperial University, Nishida gave a key-note lecture at the 6<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the English Literary Society of Japan on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1934. The title was “T. S. Eliot and Traditionalism”. Nishida began his lecture thus:

Though I have been told to speak about anything in this Society, I am a complete amateur in English literature. However, as I listen to my friend Ishida telling me about T. S. Eliot’s criticism and poetry, I vaguely feel that his thought may be somehow related to my current philosophical viewpoint, so today I’d like to talk about that. (XIII 249<sup>313</sup>)

This is, in a sense, Nishida’s declaration of strong *mis/reading* (or *appropriation*) of Eliot’s “thought” from Nishida’s own “current philosophical viewpoint” – Nishida is, in fact, (in)famous for comprehending (or claiming to have comprehended) the whole of a thinker by reading a couple of pages so as to liberally appropriate this thinker’s ideas for his own use. And so, quite expectedly, the lecture is almost entirely an explication of his current thinking with occasional references to Eliot’s terms, so that, according to Ishida’s recollection, “the lecture was hard for the scholars of English literature (including myself) to comprehend, but I saw some young scholars of the Philosophy department ardently listening” (Ishida “Prof. Nishida” 189; my translation). The content of the lecture itself is, therefore, not particularly interesting in our context, but what is instead most significant is the fact that Nishida’s “discovery” of Eliot coincided – pure coincidence, presumably – with the time when Nishida was making his final “turn” in his philosophizing to the standpoint of the so-called “dialectical World”, in which he began to address the issues of History, Nation (*minzoku*) and State (*kokka*), being stimulated by his younger colleague Tanabe’s development of the “Logic of Species” as well as some of his students’ active engagement in Marxism. Apparently, Nishida reads his own philosophical “turn” *into*

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<sup>313</sup> Quotations from Nishida are all from the (new) *Collected Works*, and only the volume numbers (Roman) and the page numbers (Arabic) are indicated. Translations are all mine.

Eliot here. Read, for example, the following passage (Note: Nishida often uses English words and phrases, which are indicated in italics below):

The whole of the past History faces us expressively as Thou. Our History mutates *from generation to generation*, but it is always contemporaneous in the absolute Present. I understand the structure of the World in this way, that is to say, *reality is historical reality*. Traditionally, Philosophy has dealt with the reality of *nature*, but that is abstraction. Reality lies in movement. The Present is historical. . . . Eliot's thought is, I believe, quite understandable from the viewpoint I have just explicated. How should we regard Tradition? The World moves as  $M_1 - M_2 - M_3$ , but, each being connected to each other circularly, emerges as a Thou in the face of the present World. Constitution of the World requires unity, that is to say, the World is constituted where a certain kind of *perception* is constituted. And it is Tradition that enables it. For instance, the Japanese World is constituted on the basis of Japanese ways of seeing, feeling, and acting. It is thus fair to say that there is a Tradition at the root of the Japanese society's constitution. Such a Tradition contains the Past and the Future. It constitutes the World as linear-*qua*-circular, circular-*qua*-linear. History is being constituted by the contemporaneity of the Past with the Present. Tradition enables the Historical World. The Present does not belong to the Present alone, but contains Tradition. The Past and the Future are not unrelated to the Present, but contemporaneous. The whole of History is constituted by one Tradition. It is common to regard Tradition as merely a set of subjective legends, but, if so, it is meaningless, and Tradition in the true sense is the origin of History, that which constitutes the ground for the very possibility of our Historical Life [*rekishiteki seimei*]. It stands facing us, being not mere nature but a Thou. It is our commander and is expressive. True *perception* is only possible for those who maintain Tradition. Then everything becomes a *historical thing*.

Just as Eliot says in "Tradition and [the] individual Talent", Tradition is not merely [an object of] *handing down*, nor [something] *lost in the sand*. Compared with such banal views, *novelty* is less bad. Tradition cannot be *inherited*, but may only be obtained by *great labour*. . . . (XIII 256-7)



This is, I suspect, by far the most megalomaniac, or “monstrous”, misreading of “Tradition and the Individual Talent” that has ever been produced, and “Eliot’s thought” is certainly not made “quite understandable” by Nishida’s interpretation. I have quoted the passage – in more or less faithful rendering of the original – at length in order to show not only Nishida’s “monstrous” style but also how liberally he appropriates Eliot’s words and phrases to support his metaphysics of “World” and “History”, by way of elevating Eliot’s idea of “Tradition” to an unprecedented height of “the origin of History, that which constitutes the ground for the very possibility of our Historical Life”.

What is particularly significant as to Nishida’s extraordinary misreading (or appropriation) of Eliot’s “Tradition and the Individual Talent” is, I submit, the way in which Nishida focalizes the word “perception” (always used in English) in this connection. Eliot has, in fact, used the word only once in the entire essay, apparently without charging it with any special significance: “the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence” (SW 49). Eliot’s “perception” is certainly nothing more than an epistemological term, just as he has often used in his philosophical studies, whereas Nishida imposes on the term an almost ontological burden (“the World is constituted where a certain kind of *perception* is constituted”) – and, at times, even shamanistic (“Thus we listen to the profound Voice that makes History possible” (*ibid.*)). Then, Nishida’s misreading turns more amazing, or even amusing:

Hence, [the way of] recognizing the Thou that enables the unity of the World is the *historical sense*, and it is therefore fair to say that the *historical sense* involves a *perception*. That means, the Past is not only past but present. The Past stands facing us contemporaneously, that is, it maintains its *simultaneous existence*. In the *historical sense*, as Eliot says, *the timeless* and *the temporal* are one. The way of thinking from such a standpoint is Eliot’s traditionalism. . . . What Eliot means by *intellect* when he describes Arnold’s poetry as “*highly organized form of*

*intellectual activity*”<sup>314</sup> ought to be a *contemplative activity* that unifies Past, Present, and Future. Tradition is not merely constitutive of the subjective world, but ought to be that which enables the objective formation of the World, so that *thought* and *sensibility* ought to be one in Tradition. That’s why Eliot says that Tennyson and Browning did not *feel* their *thought* like the odour of a rose, but that, for Donne, *thought* was *experience*. Tradition as *catalyst* unifies the World. That’s where Tradition is *perception* and, at the same time, *intellect*. That’s where Poetry is born.

(XIII 257-8; italics indicate Nishida’s direct use of English terms)

This is no place to ridicule Nishida’s misreading, but, rather, we must explicate the logic implicated, or complicated, in this singular misreading and examine its logical consequence in his later political thought and engagement. It goes without saying that Nishida’s powerful thesis above that “Tradition as *catalyst* unifies the World” has nothing much to do with Eliot’s famous “analogy”, in which the “catalyst” concerned is not “Tradition” but “the mind of the poet”, while the end result of catalysis is not “the World” but a piece of poetry. In Nishida’s interpretation, “Tradition” is no longer a strategically important fortress for a *metoikos* to occupy in order to claim his legitimacy, authority, and privilege over those who simply “inherit” the *oikos*, but it is now a “transcendent” mediation between the Individual and the World (*qua* “Historical World”); “Tradition” is no longer a midwife for the individual talent to create a “really new” poem, but it is now the very possibility for *poiesis* of the Individual as a “historical thing”. Nishida concludes his lecture by appealing to Eliot’s comradeship, by which Eliot would certainly be puzzled:

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<sup>314</sup> Though Nishida presents this quotation from “The Perfect Critic” as Eliot’s view of Arnold, it is, in fact, not directly related to either Arnold or Eliot in the original context: “When a distinguished critic observed recently, in a newspaper article, that ‘poetry is the most highly organized form of intellectual activity,’ we were conscious that we were reading neither Coleridge nor Arnold” (SW 1). It is rather amusing to see that Nishida seems *literally* to have read only the first couple of pages of each essay, and that, besides, he often totally misquotes – or so liberally *mis/reads* – what little he has read.

. . . And, when we listen to the transcendent Voice of Tradition, we become truly human. In the same way, the true poetry is created where subjective *feeling* and *emotion* are unified on the ground of Tradition. . . . What makes History possible is neither Nature, nor Society, nor Race. It is Tradition that conditions the very possibility of History. In earlier times, there emerged on the surface those *myth[s]* and *legend[s]* that belonged to superstition, but they also contain, deep inside, something profound and transcendent that may potentially develop into Tradition. In the present age, however, such profound Tradition has been destroyed. Restoring that Tradition is our mission today. And that, I believe, is what Eliot regards as his own ideal.

(XIII 260; italics indicate Nishida's direct use of English terms)

There is certainly something *excessive* about Nishida's misreading of Eliot's "Tradition": something to go *beyond* Nature, Society, and Race – by extension, Nation-State or Empire. But, for now, let us follow the imminent consequences of Nishida's Theory, rather than the immanent *resistance* to it.<sup>315</sup>

In fact, Nishida's misreading of "Tradition as *catalyst*" is quite persistent – it persists well into the later, controversial phase of his "Philosophy of World History". In "The Problem of Generation and Development of Species", which Nishida wrote in early 1937 (the year in which Japanese invasion in the Continent turns a full-scale war), he still writes unequivocally, "Just as Eliot says, Tradition can be compared to the catalyst in chemical combination" (VIII 195). And yet, "Tradition" here is no longer a purely metaphysical entity, but has, by being grafted onto Leopold Ranke's "World History", been somehow *materialized* thus:

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<sup>315</sup> Naoki Sakai suggested to me that the I-Thou relationship, with the radical incommensurability and discontinuity involved in it, produces precisely a similar kind of dynamism that pertains to precarious and potentially subversive reproductivity, as we have found in the "double reading" of Eliot's Theory and Poetry. Although there is no space to develop this point in this thesis, the "double reading" of Nishida is certainly much needed and would no doubt shed a new light on the Nishida-Eliot intersection.

Only those nation-subjects [*kokumin*] who maintain their profound and great Tradition may be said to live World-Historically. Our nation, endowed with the Tradition of its own generation and development, ought to consider this thesis seriously. I believe that the Imperial House [*kōshitsu*] has been the ground for this Tradition. The meaning of restoration [of the Imperial rule] has always been this and this only: not returning to the past but always stepping forward into the new. (VIII 212)

Let us not fixate too much on “the Imperial House” here, for this expression was then quite common and not so much politicized as it is today, and, above all, Nishida apparently believed, odd though it may sound, that the Imperial House was the last bulwark against Japanese imperialist expansion. What seems of greater significance is that the subject in the process of Tradition’s mediation has changed from the individual “I” to the collective “nation-subjects [*kokumin*]”, and also that the adjectives (“profound and great”) are added to “Tradition”. That is to say, a kind of universality (or *excess*) that the original I-Thou scheme has involved is now taken over by the generality of Nation-State, while speaking of “profound and great” Traditions logically entails exclusion of “shallow and small” traditions. In short, Nishida’s misreading of Eliot’s “Tradition” has, at this particular socio-historical conjuncture, come (back) to resemble Eliot’s idea of “Tradition” as the omnivorous, progressive and expansionist, Hegelian “History”.

As is the case with Eliot’s review on Scottish literature, this line of argument does inevitably lead to a racialized, if not necessarily racist, mode of thinking.<sup>316</sup> Nishida’s 1940 best-seller, *The Problem of Japanese Culture*, amply shows this connection. In this well-publicized (later heavily-criticized) comparative study of the world cultures, Nishida once again summons Eliot:

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<sup>316</sup> As for the “super-national” characteristics of the “racial” thinking (“the paradoxes of universality”) and its necessary cultural imperialism (“the universal extensions”), see Balibar’s “Racism and Nationalism”.

Without *minzoku*,<sup>317</sup> there would be no Historical formation, nor would there be any sort of creation. *Minzoku* is not simply born, but that which is creating and being created. Without the self-identity-in-contradiction between the whole One and the individual Many, there would be no creation. A great individual is always representative of a certain *minzoku*. T. S. Eliot says that Tradition is not inherited but obtained by great labour, that it involves the historical sense, and that the historical sense that unifies the temporal and the extra-temporal makes one traditional. It is Tradition that creates things as self-definition of the Eternal Now by making the Past and the Future one with the Present, which is like the so-called *catalyst*. . . . One *minzoku* inevitably and incessantly conflicts with another *minzoku* as a driving force of Historical formation in the Historical space. Otherwise, there would be no Historical formation. However, mere power struggle leads to self-destruction of both. Where they become one in creation, there is the human. In this respect alone, *minzoku* as *kokka* [State] is the Moral Subject. *Kokka* is not merely *das moralische Sollen*, but, as Ranke says, ought to be *die moralische Energie* – neither a mere power nor a mere spirit. (IX 81-2)

“*Minzoku* as *kokka*” (i.e., Nation-State) is now identified with “the Moral Subject” of the World History, where the struggles for survival seem to recommend certain kinds of “union”, such as that between England and Scotland, in the name of what Ranke terms the “moral energy”. As is well known, this Rankean term is to become a buzzword in the notorious *Chūōkōron* round-table discussions (Nov. 1941 ~ Nov. 1942), in which four of Nishida’s prominent disciples eulogize the “Great East Asian War” (i.e., the Asia-Pacific War; the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was between the first discussion and the second) from what they call the “World-Historical standpoint”.<sup>318</sup> It should perhaps be

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<sup>317</sup> The translation of the Japanese word “*minzoku*” is particularly difficult and controversial. The word can mean “race”, “people”, “nation”, “ethnic group”, and “folk [*Volk*]” with distinctly Nazi connotation. Graham Parkes offers a relevant discussion in terms of the English translations of Kuki Shuzo’s use of “*minzoku*” (“Definite” 164-170). See also Sakai “Imperial” (esp. 181-194) for “Transpacific Complicity and *Minzoku*”. Sakai’s discussion of Takata Yasuma’s investment in the word “*minzoku*” is most pertinent to our argument here.

<sup>318</sup> For details of these *Chūōkōron* discussions, see Uhl and, from the “apologist” camp, Horio. See also Sakai *Translation* 163-176; Goto-Jones *Political* 109-115; Mihara “Empires”.

remembered that, on Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> 1940, just before the publication of Nishida's best-seller [*The Problem of Japanese Culture*], the Japanese colonial government implemented the *sōshi-kaimei* policy that forced the colonial Korean subjects to change their names into Japanese-style ones, thus assimilating (in effect, eliminating) one *minjok* [Korean] into another *minzoku* [Japanese].

Although the Master apparently did not share the disciples' euphoria over Pearl Harbor and racist comments on "low-level" Asian peoples, Nishida himself could not help applying his earlier value-judgment ("profound and great Tradition") to selection (hence, exclusion) as to who gets to be the Subjects of the World History. In February 1944, Nishida wrote one of his last and most controversial essays, originally entitled "*Kokutai*" (literally, "Nation-Body") but later renamed simply "The Supplementary essay to the *Philosophical Studies* Vol. 4". Here the above question of selection is clearly stated in terms of "profound" and "shallow":

*Minzoku* that has realized the World in itself is *kokka* [State]. Therefore, the Historical World does not constitute itself only "Naturally". It ought to be Historical-Natural. The World's self-consciousness in that respect necessarily involves the differentiation between the profound and the shallow. (XI 194-5)

Such differentiation between the profound and the shallow justifies the imperialist logic of assimilation – with which we are already familiar in Eliot's "Scottish" review, in which he appreciates the "great advantage to be won" by "Scottish, throwing in its luck with English". In Nishida's case, this *ideologeme* assumes an oddly "philosophical" attire:

*Kokka* possesses *kokutai*, and that which possesses *kokutai* is *kokka*. We ought not to crown a merely particular life of *minzoku* with the name of *kokka*. Only that which is uniquely Historical-formative may claim its independence as a true *kokka* in the World. The abstract idea of *kokka* based on mere *minzoku*'s

self-determination ought to be reconsidered in the present day. I do not mean to ignore *minzoku*'s self-determination. Of course, every *minzoku* is [to a certain degree] Historical-formative, but, from the World-Historical standpoint, there ought to be the form-matter relation between one *minzoku* and another. According to various circumstances in the course of the World-Historical development, one *minzoku* becomes the form and another the matter. The latter may be said to maintain its own Historical mission by being the matter. (XI 197)

There could hardly be any more metaphysical justification of imperialism than introducing the Aristotelian form-matter relation. It is, however, not at all different from Eliot's conclusion that it is "an evidence of strength, rather than of weakness, that the Scots language and the Scottish literature did not maintain a separate existence" ("Scottish" 681). It is therefore not surprising that Nishida's argument falls into the all-too-familiar trap of Japanese exceptionalism as regards *kokutai* [Nation-Body]:

To be exact, it is safe to say that no nation but ours possesses *kokutai*. But it does not mean that our *kokutai* is merely particular. We should not only pride ourselves on the particularity of our *kokutai*, but also attend to its World-Historical profundity and greatness and articulate it clearly. We must then spread it all over the world both in theory and in practice. (XI 202)

To this passage, Nishida adds a note describing the Imperial House as "the absolute fact for the Japanese people". From such a standpoint, Nishida continues, "every *thing* belongs to the Imperial House and every *event* belongs to the Imperial House. As everything is '*oh-yake*' [public], we are one family with the Imperial House at the center" (XI 203). Nishida's deliberate evocation of the ancient meaning of "*oh-yake*" by putting the word in quotation marks reminds us of its etymology: the Big [*oh*] House [*yake*] – *Oikos Megas* – *Meta-Oikos*.

## Ch'oe Chaesŏ's Order

Ch'oe Chaesŏ (1908-1964) would no doubt have been credited as the founder of modern literary criticism in Korea, but for his “pro-Japanese” activities during the colonial period. He was indeed a child of Japanese Imperial rule (1910-1945). Born into a wealthy Korean family two years before the Japan-Korea “Union” (which is, of course, nothing but Japanese annexation of Korea), he grew up reading Western literature through Japanese translation. He studied English literature at Keijo [Seoul] Imperial University (the 6<sup>th</sup> of the Imperial Universities – the top of the hierarchy of Japanese educational system) and its graduate school. After a brief period of research in London, he was honored as the first graduate to be employed as a lecturer at his alma mater. Needless to say, he was one of the most successful cases of colonial Koreans, and he even left his mark on the “Japanese” academia.<sup>319</sup> But he soon quit the academic post – apparently because, as a Korean, he had no hope to get tenure – and launched a career as the most prominent literary critic in colonial Korea (advocate of the so-called “Intellectualist criticism”) and editor of the major literary journal, *Inmun p'yŏngnon* (1939.10 ~ 1941.4), which he modeled after T. S. Eliot's *Criterion*.<sup>320</sup> Under the strong pressure of the ever-tightening assimilation policy implemented by the colonial government – the invasion of China was already at a deadlock and a war with the U.S. was imminent – it is not hard to imagine that Ch'oe Chaesŏ read Eliot's “Last Words” in the final issue of the *Criterion* (Jan. 1939) most seriously, even personally: “For this immediate future, perhaps for a long way ahead, the

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<sup>319</sup> For instance, the Japanese translation of Irving Babbitt's *Rousseau and Romanticism* is Ch'oe Chaesŏ's. Also, he not only actively participated in the *naichi* [mainland] academia, but also contributed to such prestigious Japanese journals as *Shisō* and *Kaizō*.

<sup>320</sup> In the inaugural issue (Oct. 1939), Ch'oe Chaesŏ wrote a kind of obituary for the *Criterion*, which had just ceased its publication earlier in the same year, as follows: “In the midst of turmoil of the postwar cultural scene, the journal that reflected Eliot's own critical view that its sole mission was to achieve adjustment between present and past had firmly maintained Classicism at its core, being multilateral and at times revolutionary towards the outside world, so that its contribution to maintenance of Culture cannot be overestimated” (my translation [from Korean]).



continuity of culture may have to be maintained by a very small number of people indeed – and these not necessarily the best equipped with worldly advantages . . .” (“Last Words” 274). Albeit briefly, Ch’oe Chaesŏ was successful in forming a Korean “phalanx” – a watchword of the *Criterion* group<sup>321</sup> – composed of all the major literary and critical figures across the political spectrum (e.g., Im Hwa, Yu Chino, and Paek Ch’ŏl) as well as the promising younger generation (e.g., Sŏ Insik and Pak Ch’iu), which may legitimately be called a colonial Korean version of the “Popular Front” – but, of course, with exclusively cultural emphasis. And yet, due to the scrap-and-build policy of the colonial government, all the existing journals were abolished, and Ch’oe Chaesŏ was entrusted with the publication of “the only cultural journal in the Peninsula<sup>322</sup>”, named *Kokumin Bungaku* (1941.11 ~ 1945.5). As we discuss presently, the catachresis involved in the word “*kokumin*” – which literally means “nation-state [*koku*] subjects [*min*]”, but which can and must mean, when used by the assimilated Koreans, “imperial subjects” – is at the center of Ch’oe Chaesŏ’s *critical* wager and his ultimate “treason against the Korean *minjok* [race]”. As he had been the sole dominant figure in the colonial Korean literary and cultural scenes towards the end of Japanese colonial rule, so was he, as a matter of course, obliterated from the Korean history after the liberation (i.e., the demise of the Japanese Empire). From the liberation in 1945 till his death in 1964, his name was only remembered as a genuinely academic personality who produced such voluminous works in Korean as *The Principles of Literature*, *The History of English Literature*, and *The Art of Shakespeare* – much like his contemporary New Critical pundits in the U.S. In 1965, his posthumous monograph in English, *Shakespeare’s Art as Order of Life* [by Jaisou Choe], was published in Vantage Press in New York – which may well be counted as an ultimate success for a scholar of

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<sup>321</sup> For example, E. R. Curtius, in his contribution to the *Criterion* (Nov. 1927), plead for restoration of “a hidden aristocracy in Europe [who] does not know about itself”: “if we knew one another, we should form a phalanx, and save the sacred objects of our past, as Æneas the *penates* of Troy, to set them up and do them honour upon a new soil that holds the promise of future greatness” (394).

<sup>322</sup> Much like Algeria under the French rule, Colonial Korea was then regarded as an integral part of Imperial Japan, so that it was simply called the “Peninsula” as opposed to the “Mainland”.

English literature in a non-English speaking country.<sup>323</sup>

A colonial subject is, in a sense, a *metoikos* by default – even though s/he stays in her/his birthplace, her/his *oikos* (i.e., national sovereignty) has been lost and taken over by the Empire, or *Meta-Oikos*. This sense must have been particularly strong for the colonial Koreans, due to the unprecedentedly rapid and strict assimilation policies, such as “*naisen ittai*” [literally: “Japan and Korea as One Body”], “*sōshi kaimei*” [forced adoption of Japanese-style names] and, needless to say, banning the use of the Korean language, implemented by the Japanese Empire. In the face of losing their native language as well as their native names, every Korean intellectual had to take a stand – some insisted on “*tetteiteki ittairon*” [“outright assimilation” – their slogan was “to produce a Japanese Prime Minister out of our *minjok*”], and others flung themselves into the resistance movement. Ch’oe Chaesŏ had a different strategy – a strategy that may be called “postcolonial” *avant la lettre*.

Since the very beginning of his academic career, Ch’oe Chaesŏ has been a universalist. It is often argued that intellectuals like Ch’oe Chaesŏ with their first-rate Western discipline (usually acquired through the Japanese Imperial education system) were trying to overcome the Japanese cultural domination by way of immediate access to the “universal” Western culture. As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>324</sup> it is this very obsession with universality – what the authors of *Éloge de la Créolité* call “le souci obsessionnel de l’Universel”<sup>325</sup> – that has trapped Ch’oe Chaesŏ into a *theoretical* justification of his

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<sup>323</sup> For more details on the vicissitudes of Ch’oe Chaesŏ’s political as well as critical career, see my “Ch’oe Chaesŏ’s Order”.

<sup>324</sup> See my “The Problem of *Kokumin Bungaku*” and “Between Universality and Universalism”.

<sup>325</sup> “One of the hindrances to our creativity has been the obsessional concern with the Universal. Old syndrome of the colonized: afraid of being merely his depreciated self and ashamed of wanting to be what his master is, the colonized accepts therefore – supreme subtlety – the values of his masters as the ideal in the world. Hence exteriority vis-à-vis ourselves. Hence the defamation of the Creole language and the deep mangrove swamp of Creoleness. Hence – except for unique miracles – our aesthetic shipwreck. Creole literature will have nothing to do with the Universal, or

collaboration. His “intellectualist criticism” is, without doubt, fruit of his academic research in English literature – a kind of genealogical search for the “intellectual” elements inherent in Romanticism (e.g., “Limits of Poetry” (June 1931), “On Richard Hurd’s *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*” (Nov. 1931), and “On Addison’s Theory of Imagination” (March 1933) – all published in *The Bulletin of the Keijo Imperial University English Association*), as well as his keen interest in the contemporary Anglo-American literary criticism (e.g., “On Wyndham Lewis” (*Bulletin*, March 1933), “Preservation of Literature” (*Bulletin*, June 1933), “The Critical Thought of T. E. Hulme” (*Shisō*,<sup>326</sup> Dec. 1934), “Current Critical Scenes in Britain” (*Kaizō*,<sup>327</sup> March 1936), “The Problem of Personality in Contemporary Criticism” (*Studies in English Literature*,<sup>328</sup> Apr. 1936) and, as mentioned above, the Japanese translation of Irving Babbitt’s *Rousseau and Romanticism* (1939-1940)) – he has written all these works in Japanese. Around the time he resigned from the lectureship at Keijo Imperial University in 1934 (still in his mid-20’s), he began to distinguish himself, rising in the ruins of Marxist as well as nativist literary criticisms, as the “Intellectualist” literary theorist in the Korean critical scenes by publishing numerous articles in Korean, such as “Construction of the Modern Intellectualist Literary Theory” (Aug. 1934), “Criticism and Science” (Sept. 1934), “The Mission of Korean Literature and Criticism” (Jan. 1935), and “On Satiric Literature, or a Way to Break the Deadlock of Current Korean Literature” (July 1935) – these are written for one of the major Korean daily newspapers, *Chosun Ilbo*. This last essay in five installments is of particular interest,

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this disguised adherence to Western values, it will have nothing to do with this concern with exhibiting the transparency of oneself, exhibiting oneself to the attractiveness of the obvious. We want to deepen our Creoleness in full consciousness of the world” (*Éloge* 111).

<sup>326</sup> This article was, in fact, the very first contribution by a Korean to the prestigious *Shisō* [Thought], which was then the main organ of publication for Nishida Kitarō’s works.

<sup>327</sup> One of the biggest, left-inclined journals in Japan at that time. *Kaizō* literally means “reconstruction” or “reorganization”.

<sup>328</sup> The most prestigious quarterly in the field of English literature, issued by the English Literary Society of Japan. Nishida’s above-discussed lecture, “T. S. Eliot and Traditionalism”, has also been published as “On Traditionalism” in the same journal in the previous year.

in that Ch'oe Chaesŏ is directly engaged with the current issues, defining the “mission of criticism” as “presenting the direction of [national] literature and defending the zone of its creative activities” (II) and thus offering (intellectual) satire as a possible “breakthrough” – an odd amalgam of a moralist sense of crisis *à la* Babbitt and the “destructive elements” of immoral Lewisian satire. Such oddness does, I submit, covertly but eloquently speak of the fate of colonial intellectuals. Read, for instance, the following reasoning for satire (“a kind of revenge”) to be a possible “breakthrough” to the current deadlock of Korean literature: “Even if one has lost everything in life, insofar as he possesses the power of intellect so as to anatomize his despair, expose its vanity, and satirize its worthlessness, then he is still the master of himself” (IV; my translation [from Korean]). In a colonized society, Order always comes, in the form of executive orders, from the Imperial center abroad, so that the colonial subjects cannot even set their land in order by themselves, and then all that the creative and/or critical *intellect* can do is to become “the master of himself” by radically satirizing himself in order to prove, rather desperately, that he is at least an *intellectual* agent capable of exercising “the power of intellect”. In that respect, “the zone of creative activities” is not simply a symbol, but the very last fortress they have to protect – so it seemed at least to Ch'oe Chaesŏ the Intellectualist.

Ch'oe Chaesŏ's editorship of *Inmun p'yŏngnon* (1939.10 ~ 1941.4), modeled after the *Criterion*, is such an attempt to “defend the zone of creative activities” in Korean literature, and, as briefly mentioned above, there is certainly a strong sense of what may legitimately be compared to the (cultural) “Popular Front” in Europe or the “phalanx” of the *Criterion* group. Korean literature may, as it were, be “the master of [it]self” at least on the pages of this journal – apparently without mediation of the Japanese Imperial rule – in the name of the universal “intellect”. However, it is, in a sense, an *imaginary* autonomy in the service of what Balibar calls “fictive universality”: “not the idea that the common nature of individuals is given or already there, but, rather, the fact that it is produced inasmuch as particular identities are relativized, and become mediations for the realization

of a superior and more abstract goal” (*Politics* 157) – that is, what we have been calling “generalities disguised as universality”, i.e., “universalism” rather than “universality”. Balibar also labels it “Hegelian universality”, in that what is at stake is a kind of Hegelian concerns with “the intrinsic relationship between the construction of *hegemony*, or *total ideology*, and *autonomous individuality*, or the *person*” (*ibid.*) – that is, what we have been calling the “Particular-General Axis”. In this context, Ch’oe Chaesŏ’s celebrated theory of satire may be understood as an attempted mediation between the satirist as an autonomous individual and his/her artwork as an intellectual Order-in-itself – without regard to the actual and actually regulatory Imperial Order. It then follows that, as we have seen that a generality disguised as universality tends to be “transcended” by, or “assimilated” to, a bigger or more powerful generality,<sup>329</sup> so is Ch’oe Chaesŏ’s theoretical universalism that aims to “defend the zone of creative activities” (which he has put into practice as an able editor of a successful journal), vulnerable to assimilation by the more powerful Imperial Order, because it is, after all, not a subversive “contact zone” but a subsumptive mediation between autonomous individuality and an *imaginary* intellectual Order. In fact, as the demise of the journal draws near, Ch’oe Chaesŏ’s universalistic views are, slightly but significantly, getting tainted by the “logic of species” (i.e., generality). Read the following passage from his “Transformation of Literary Spirit”, the leading essay of the final issue of *Inmun p’yŏngnon* (April 1941):

As far as Literature is concerned, it is expected that the modern idea that an individual may contribute to cultural creativity solely by virtue of his unique talent is, whether it is true or not, no longer tolerated. It is as though the Olympiad in which cultural athletes of all nations gather to compete with their creativity had been closed. And such creativity is now required to be backed up by a little more

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<sup>329</sup> Balibar nicely illustrates this mechanism in terms of “how one great historical ‘fiction’, that of the universalistic church, could be substituted by another historical ‘fiction’, that of the secular, rational institutions of the state (in practice, the nation-state), with equally universalistic aims” (*Politics* 156).

concrete and serious issues, such as the subsistence of *minjok* and activities of *kokumin*. (9; my translation [from Korean])

The Singular-Universal scheme (“his unique talent” – “cultural creativity”) is clearly intercepted by the generalities (*minjok* and *kokumin*), although this generality is still ambiguous, as “*minjok*” in this context still has a connotation of *Korean* race or nation, while “*kokumin*” clearly reflects the prevalent ideology of consolidation of the Japanese Imperial subjects. Such a “turn” in theoretical standpoints (i.e., replacement of the universal by the downright generality) requires “courage”, rather than “theory”. Ch’oe Chaesŏ writes in his “Editor’s Prefatory Note” to the same issue:

The cause of the current doldrums of Korean literature is, of course, due to the state of emergency. However, we should not appeal to stop-gap measures for the sake of the current state of affairs [*jikyoku*], but we must instead enhance the national=imperial [*kokkateki*] mission on the basis of Literature’s eternity. For that purpose, we need courage, rather than a shrewd theoretical inquiry – that is to say, we, too, need the kind of courage that is always necessary for those who leap over the gap and reach the height of new historical creativity. (3)

As the universalistic Olympiad has been closed, History now rules – and the Subject of this History is clearly “*kokka*”, which is, in this context, the Japanese Imperial-Nation-State. With this rather pathetic pronouncement of “courage”, *Inmun p’yŏngnon* was abruptly shut down, and after half a year of preparation (i.e., negotiation with the colonial government), Ch’oe Chaesŏ commenced the new and “only cultural journal in the Peninsula”, *Kokumin Bungaku* [*National=Imperial Literature*], in November 1941.

Although, in retrospect, *Kokumin Bungaku* may be regarded as a downright propaganda machine of the colonial government ever since its inauguration, it should be noted that Ch’oe Chaesŏ’s original plan was “4 Japanese issues and 8 Korean issues a year”. This plan of bilingual publication was, as a matter of course, soon abandoned, and the

journal became, indeed, nothing but a propaganda machine. Having said that, however, should we simply discard this colonial intellectual's single-handed efforts as a wholly worthless, definitely damnable act of treason to his *minjok*? Was there any moment of subversion in his *excessive* investment in the word “*kokumin*”? That is to say, was there any potential of inventing / discovering a new *problematic* by deliberately *misreading*, hence *appropriating*, this prevalent Japanese word “*kokumin*” – a *critical* potentiality that may well be called “postcolonial” in our current theoretical language? In other words, when Ch'oe Chaesŏ used, repeatedly and almost compulsively, the word “*kokumin*”, was it simply the same as the “Mainland” Japanese would mean by the same word? For instance, when Kōyama Iwao, disciple of Nishida Kitarō and prominent theorist of the Japanese Imperial version of the “World History”, said in the above-mentioned infamous *Chūōkōron* discussions at almost exactly the same time, “I believe that the Subject of *die moralische Energie* is *kokumin*. ‘*Minzoku*’ is a cultural-historical concept of the nineteenth century, but, in today's world, whatever its past significance may be, ‘*minzoku*’ contains no World-Historical force” – did Ch'oe Chaesŏ's “*kokumin*” have exactly the same meaning and reference as Kōyama's?

In the inaugural issue of *Kokumin Bungaku* (Nov. 1941), Ch'oe Chaesŏ contributes a manifesto-style essay, “Requisites for *Kokumin Bungaku*”, the second paragraph of which reads as follows:

It is certainly not right to regard the term “*kokumin-teki*” [adjective of “*kokumin*”] in an offhand manner, and yet, at the same time, we mustn't take “*kokumin bungaku*” for too restricted a meaning. *Kokumin bungaku* is a great literature that is yet to be created by the hands of the whole *kokumin* [i.e., Japanese imperial nation that now includes colonial Koreans as members of “One Body”]. We don't have to put up a fence and confine its significance. Especially, if one thinks that only a certain limited method and object of writing can make *kokumin bungaku* is, in fact, wrongheaded. *Kokumin bungaku* must needs uphold a high

goal and retain its wide radius. We don't have to forcibly limit its scope insofar as we keep the *kokumin-teki* backbone at the very center, don't we?

(34; my translation [from Japanese])

At the very beginning, it is already apparent that Ch'oe Chaesŏ's aim is a deliberate (thus *performative*<sup>330</sup>) maximal interpretation, or *misreading* in the sense of over-interpretation, of the term "*kokumin*" – in fact, all through this essay, he repeatedly emphasizes that not only "*kokumin bungaku*" but also "*kokumin*" itself is yet-to-be-created and shall be created by "us Koreans" – here, needless to say, the word "*kokumin*" borders on catachresis. From the point of view of the "Mainland" Japanese, "*kokumin*" belongs – has always belonged ever since the mythical past – exclusive to the Japanese *minzoku* (or *oikos*), and what the colonial subjects can hope to achieve at most is to become "almost the same, *but not quite*"<sup>331</sup> so that they may serve the Empire efficiently. In fact, Nishitani Keiji, another prominent Nishida disciple in the *Chūōkōron* discussions, talks of the necessity of "half-Japanizing several excellent races in the Empire" in order to meet the growing demand of administrators to run the ever-widening frontiers of the Empire. On the other hand, Ch'oe Chaesŏ's *pro-ject* would potentially trans-form the *oikos* (i.e., the moment of *meta-oikos*) by fabricating the yet-to-come "*kokumin bungaku*", hence "*kokumin*" itself, from the colonial periphery, so that it may be said, in one or two hundred years, that

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<sup>330</sup> Cf. "The assertion of universality by those who have conventionally been excluded by the term often produces a performative contradiction of a certain sort. But this contradiction, in Hegelian fashion, is not self-cancelling, but exposes the spectral doubling of the concept itself. And it prompts a set of antagonistic speculations on what the proper venue for the claim of universality ought to be" (Butler "Restaging" 38-9).

<sup>331</sup> Cf. "What they all share is a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the *ambivalence* of mimicry (almost the same, *but not quite*) does not merely 'rupture' the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence. . . . The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace" (Bhabha *Location* 86). In a sense, Ch'oe Chaesŏ's *mimicry* of "*kokumin*" could have been such a "menace", although, as we presently discuss, he himself has chosen to "resolve" the *ambivalence* by becoming "Japanese outright".



“*Kokumin bungaku* has started in Keijo [Seoul]”.<sup>332</sup> It is therefore fair to maintain that Ch’oe Chaesŏ’s “*kokumin bungaku*” project is *potentially* endowed with the moment of *epistemological break* – precisely in the sense that the postcolonial theory has made a clear break with the time-honored *problematic* of national literatures.

However, Ch’oe Chaesŏ fails, ultimately. It is as though his persistent obsession with Universality, Order and Intellect – hence, Theory – together with his unrivalled ability to produce exact and *transparent* translations of those complicated English and Japanese texts had prevented him from letting actualized the potentially *critical* moments that would have taken the form of such subversive alternatives as *creolization*, *mis-reading*, and *mis-translation* – i.e., the “permanent parabasis” or *resistance* to Theory. In this context, it is of great significance that, in “The Present Stage of Korean Literature” (Aug. 1942), which gives an overview of the “stages of renovation [*kakushin*]” of Korean literature up to the “present stage”<sup>333</sup> and is thus the single most important *theoretical* justification of his

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<sup>332</sup> Cf. Mary Louise Pratt’s fascinating example of the Venezuelan writer Teresa de la Parra’s autobiographical novel *Memorias de Mamá Blanca*, whose narrator says, “I believe that like tobacco, pineapples, and sugar cane, Romanticism was an indiginous [American] fruit that grew up sweet, spontaneous and hidden among colonial languors and tropical indolence until the end of the eighteenth century. Around that time, Josefina Tascher, unsuspectingly, as if she were an ideal microbe, carried it off [to Europe] tangled up in the lace of one of her headdresses, gave the germ to Napoleon in that acute form which we all know, and little by little, the troops of the First Empire, assisted by Chateaubriand, spread the epidemic everywhere” (qt. *Imperial* 135). Pratt’s following comment is, it seems, applicable to a great degree to Ch’oe Chaesŏ’s abortive project: “Arguments about origins are notoriously pointless. It is not pointless, however, to underscore the transcultural dimensions of what is canonically called European Romanticism. Westerners are accustomed to thinking of romantic projects of liberty, individualism, and liberalism as emanating *from* Europe to the colonial periphery, but less accustomed to thinking about emanations *from* the contact zones *back* into Europe” (*ibid.*). Perhaps, what Ch’oe Chaesŏ lacked was the kind of “microbic” – or “rhizomic” – sense of *humor* that *Mamá Blanca* had. He was, in short, too intelligent.

<sup>333</sup> It is interesting that Ch’oe Chaesŏ’s narration of the “stages” starts with the “Fall of Paris on June 15<sup>th</sup> in *Showa* 15<sup>th</sup> [1940]” – notice here that he even specifies the exact date (due to the time difference, it was June 14<sup>th</sup> in Paris). Its significance is, according to Ch’oe Chaesŏ, that this date marked the end of Modernity, so that Korean literature, which had followed the “fashions” of European Modernism, had to renounce its past and search for different principles, i.e., “liquidation of culturalism and transformation into statism” – hence, the inauguration of *Kokumin Bungaku*. Even here, Ch’oe Chaesŏ cannot but *theorize* everything that pertains to the present predicaments.

*tenkō*,<sup>334</sup> Ch'oe Chaesŏ has chosen to translate T. S. Eliot's celebrated theory of "Tradition" into transparent, authentic Japanese:

Let us consider what happens when a new literature is introduced into one literary Order. "The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new" [SW 50]. This is T. S. Eliot's theory as regards the relationship between Tradition and the individual talent, but this is certainly true of our case, too. It must be a *shock* that Korean literature, in the form of *kokumin bungaku*, makes a new entry into Japanese literature. However, I sincerely believe, Japanese literature will not flick this *shock* off, but will instead embrace it so that the *whole* may recover its stability, form an even greater Tradition, and make use of this *shock* to propel its progress. (15-6; my translation [from Japanese])

"Tradition and the Individual Talent" is now *translated* (or *mis/read*) into "Imperial Literature and Colonial Literature". Eliot's theory for a *metoikos* to claim its cultural authority, authenticity, and even privilege over those who belong to the British *oikos* is now *transplanted* in Colonial Korea as the logic of assimilation. Ch'oe Chaesŏ continues:

First of all, Japanese literature ought to extend its limits wider and uphold a higher ideal. In order to incorporate as its own the Korean poets and authors with different customs and pathos, Japanese literature must provide a much, much wider perspective. This is true in the case of Taiwan, and so it shall be in the case of Manchuria sooner or later. Besides, Japanese literature must always possess such a high, lively ideal that the freshly-assimilated *minzoku* may be able

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<sup>334</sup> A highly-charged key word in the intellectual history of Japan in the 1930's and 40's, which may be translated as "[political] conversion" or "turn [as in the German *Kehre*]".

to fully realize its own creative abilities and, furthermore, to get its creative will stimulated. For that purpose, the Japanese State itself must needs firmly maintain its high morality, and, in that respect, it is, I believe, profoundly significant from a cultural point of view that General Koiso, in his inauguration speech as the Governor-General, held “Moral Korea” high up as his goal. (16)

This is a desperate plea from the periphery, combined with a sense of superiority, as the closest to the Imperial center, over the other lesser peripheries. There is no longer a *performative* potential in “*kokumin bungaku*” here – no trans-formative, trans-gressive, trans-culturating moment [i.e., *meta-oikos*] of the “contact zone” or “mimicry”, but merely a con-formative (i.e., assimilationist) strategy to make the best of their closer-to-the-center status (i.e., “more cognate” with the Imperial *minzoku*) so as to gain an advantage over other lesser colonials as a more necessary member of the “*whole* existing order” [i.e., *Meta-Oikos*]. Hence, his Theory no longer posits the Korean subject as “the master of himself” – which may be regarded as a kind of *ethical* attitude in the sense that the subject-*qua*-creative-agent sticks to its own *conatus*, albeit desperately and even tragi-farcically – but instead only appeals to the Master (its viceroy, General Koiso) for a “high morality” (note the echo of “*die moralische Energie*” here) that would allow their active *subjection* to be valuable and even advantageous – an echo of Eliot’s famous words in the same essay: “a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable” (SW 52-3).

It is in this context that Ch’oe Chaesŏ brings up an odd analogy with Scottish literature – “odd”, because it is often argued that, in colonial Korea, many intellectuals showed great interest in Irish literature, such as Yi Hyosŏk (a prominent novelist and one year senior to Ch’oe Chaesŏ at Keijo English), as a “model” for their predicaments. In our discussion so far, however, the Scottish analogy is far from odd, but indeed pertinent. It does not much matter whether Ch’oe Chaesŏ did *actually* have Eliot’s review-essay on Scottish literature in mind – though highly probable, considering his ardent research in the

field of contemporary Anglo-American literary criticism in his earlier academic career. What really matters is the *theoretical* coherence, however “reactionary” and “treasonous” it may be, of this Scottish analogy with the logic of assimilation, just as we have above discussed in Eliot’s case. Just before the above-quoted theoretical take on Eliot’s “Tradition”, Ch’oe Chaesŏ has tried to vindicate the particularity of Korean literature and distinguish it from – thus, implicitly, privileging it over – other “provincial literatures”, such as “Kyūshū literature”, “Tōhoku literature”, and “Taiwan literature” (the more particular, the more general, as it were). Then he illustrates this observation by way of analogy:

If a comparison were to be drawn, it should be, I submit, Scottish literature within English literature. It is part of English literature, but, by firmly maintaining its Scottish characteristics, contributes to it in various significant ways. When the controversies over the “language question” were once clamorous here, there was a tendency among the intellectuals to compare Korean literature to Irish literature, but that is obnoxious. It is true that Irish literature is written in the English language, but its spirit is through and through anti-English, and its goal is secession from England [Britain]. . . . I do not agree with those who despair over extinction of Korean literature, nor do I agree with those who insist on its eradication by all-out integration. My intention is to let Korean literature contribute to the establishment of a new Japanese culture by virtue of Korean creativity. (15; my translation [from Japanese])

Ch’oe Chaesŏ is indeed navigating between Scylla and Charybdis – between rejection (hence, despair) of assimilation and all-out assimilation – or, as he might have said, between Irish and Welsh. Instead of choosing between the seemingly inevitable all-or-nothing choices, Ch’oe Chaesŏ has decided to “throw in his luck” with the yet-to-come “*kokumin bungaku*”, just as the prominent figures of the Scottish

Enlightenment invested in “Britain” and “invented” English literature as “British”.<sup>335</sup> Such a precarious navigation is, as discussed above, *potentially* “postcolonial”, in that the yet-to-come “*kokumin bungaku*” would trans-form each and every *oikos* (Japanese as well as Korean) altogether, where a *singular* textual event with its “microbic” (“rhizomic”) infectability (“translatability”) is always-already trans-gressive of any Particular-General entity (e.g., *minzoku*, nation, and empire). It would, in other words, bring “a permanent disjunction which inhabits all languages as such” (de Man *Resistance* 92), that is to say, a *presence as a necessary absence* of a *reine Sprache*, the Universal *sive* the Virtual. In short, by problematizing the *idée reçue* of “*kokumin bungaku*”, Ch’oe Chaesŏ might have “picture[d] the transformation of the problematic” (Althusser *Reading* 28).

Nevertheless, Ch’oe Chaesŏ would rather reach the conclusion that his Theory has demanded – the (re)solution by virtue of the Imperial Order, the only remaining Order available, in order to satisfy his obsession with Universality. In 1944, when it was quite apparent that the Japanese Empire was already on the losing side, Ch’oe Chaesŏ contributed to his journal as the lead-off article of the April issue his most infamous essay entitled “*Matsurou Bungaku*” – an essay he wrote for the first time in his Japanized name, “Ishida Kōzō”. Now that the “questions” have vanished into air, there remains only “a clear answer”:

The question has always been simple and plain: Are you fully confident that you can become Japanese outright? This question has led to other questions: What is “Japanese”? What should one do to become Japanese? In order to become Japanese, how should one deal with his being Korean?

These questions were the last remaining barriers that cannot be removed by any intellectual understanding or theoretical maneuver. Unless we break through these barriers, however, we can hardly understand the overall significance of the

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<sup>335</sup> See Robert Crawford’s *Devolving English Literature* and also the essays collected in his edition of *The Scottish Invention of English Literature*.

Great East Asian War – *hakkō i[chi]u* [All the world under one roof], *naisen ittai* [Japan and Korea as One Body], establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, and foundation of the New World Order. Even if you talk of “comprehending the idea of the fatherland”, it cannot be concrete or actual, unless you have a clear answer to those questions.

Here, let me write about my own experience. Towards the end of the previous year, I made a firm resolution to set my various affairs in order, and so, to begin with, I changed my name into Japanese on the New Year day. Then, on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, I visited Chōsen Shrine<sup>336</sup> to make a reverent report to that effect. At the moment I bowed deep to the Gods,<sup>337</sup> I felt as if I were lifted up by the fresh air and liberated from all doubts.

(“Matsurou” 5; my translation [from Japanese])

Ch’oe Chaesō has flung himself onto a kind of ecstatic identification with the Japanese Imperial House (i.e., Nishida’s *Meta-Oikos*), and transformed himself, rather than transforming the Japanese *oikos* (*meta-oikos*), into a new identity, an authentic “Japanese outright” named Ishida Kōzō – or, as was commonly called then, a “flesh-and-blood baby of the Emperor”. The trick here is that the “Emperor” or “Imperial House” is not *human* at all, but incarnation of the *superhuman* law of History or Nature beyond any positive laws and theories, so that *becoming-Japanese* has nothing to do with the pressing (thus transient) issues concerning *oikos*, but instead that it is simply the way to become “the embodiment of the law” – not a pragmatic choice (which should have been rather ridiculous at this stage of the devastating war) but a purely metaphysical (re)solution.<sup>338</sup> In short, Ishida Kōzō, *né*

<sup>336</sup> The Shintō shrine built on the peak of Mt. Namsan, looking down on the whole city of Seoul [Keijō], in 1925 as the head of the Shintō hierarchy in Korea [Chōsen]. Colonial Koreans, notably school pupils, were required to visit the Shrine on various occasions, so it was regarded as a symbol of Japanese oppression. Naturally, one of the first things Korean people did after the liberation was to destroy the Shrine.

<sup>337</sup> Chōsen Shrine was dedicated to Amaterasu (Goddess of the Sun and the Universe; progenitor of the Japanese emperors) and Emperor Meiji (grandfather of Hirohito, Emperor Shōwa).

<sup>338</sup> Hannah Arendt’s ingenious analysis of totalitarian rule best captures the *logic* behind such a metaphysical leap: “It is the monstrous, yet seemingly unanswerable claim of totalitarian rule that, far from being ‘lawless,’ it goes to the sources of authority from which positive laws received their

Ch'oe Chaesŏ, has thus substituted the *Meta-Oikos* (re)solution for the *meta-oikos* problematic, being no longer able to live what Paul Gilroy calls the “double consciousness”, to “embrace the fragmentation of self (doubling and splitting) which modernity seems to promote” (*Black* 188). This was the final standpoint that his Theory had *logically* reached, from which he made his final piece of *Literary Theory*, “Matsurou Bungaku”, before he abruptly embarked on creative writing – he was to write several novels as a Japanese subject [of Korean descent] in the Japanese language on Korean subject-matters during the final days that marked the setting of the sun on the Japanese Empire – those novels were, of course, doomed to fall into oblivion.

The deliberately antiquated title, “Matsurou Bungaku”, may be descriptively translated as “Literature that hallows and/or serves the Emperor”. The prose style is a genuine *mimicry* of the typical Japanese cultural fascist style, such as the *Nihon Roman-ha* (Japanese Romantics),<sup>339</sup> quoting the ancient scriptures with Motoori Norinaga’s annotations and drawing heavily on the etymological as well as quasi-anthropological knowledge (e.g. “matsurou” (hallow, serve) is cognate with “matsuri” (festival) and “matsurigoto” (politics) – a call for return to the ancient theocracy, pure and simple). In the midst of such a mimicked Japanese-fascist-style prose, however, Ch'oe Chaesŏ’s characteristic comparison with European literature comes in and the prose style momentarily reverts to his earlier academico-critical one. This queer disjunction in the

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ultimate legitimation, that far from being arbitrary it is more obedient to these superhuman forces than any government ever was before, and that from wielding its power in the interest of one man, it is quite prepared to sacrifice everybody’s vital immediate interests to the execution of what it assumes to be the law of History or the law of Nature. . . . [Totalitarian policy] can do without the *consensus iuris*, because it promises to release the fulfillment of law from all action and will of man; and it promises justice on earth because it claims to make mankind itself the embodiment of the law” (*Origins* 461-2).

<sup>339</sup> It must be noted here that the common notion that identifies the *Nihon Roman-ha* with a simple-minded, reactionary Japanist ideology is rather misleading. Drawing on re-valuations of the German Romantics by Philip Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Paul de Man, Kimoto amply shows that Yasuda Yojurō, the most representative of the *Nihon Roman-ha* and himself a Germanist, had ingeniously taken over the problematics of the German Romantics, so as to present the subversive moment (“Romantic revolt”) in his critical discourses. See Kimoto’s *Standpoint*.

prose style should itself be an interesting object for symptomatic reading, but let us here focus on the content of this “comparison”. Ch’oe Chaesŏ surveys the whole history of European literature in such a way as to combine Eliot’s historiography with Hulme’s and Babbitt’s: “Insofar as the Europeans recognized the human fallibility and original sin, and aspire to the classical ideal of perfect personality or follow the Divine Law in imitation of Christ, they were able to maintain the Kingdom of Spiritual Order for quite a great length of time”, but Renaissance individualism begot “all those monsters of Modernity”, such as “European Imperialism, Naturalist literature, Rousseau, Faust, and others” (“Matsurou” 8-9). Then, probably to the surprise of contemporary readers,<sup>340</sup> Ch’oe Chaesŏ talks approvingly of “those select few who are aware of this predicament” – Charles Maurras in France, Irving Babbitt in America, and T. S. Eliot in Britain – singling Eliot out as the “painful embodiment of this century’s maladies and an attempt to overcome them – in his capacity as an acute critic as well as a shrewd poet” (9). Then Ch’oe Chaesŏ deviates towards a kind of very short introduction of T. S. Eliot:

Eliot, who started as a Paris-loving Modernist, was temporarily absorbed in the Classical Humanism *à la* Babbitt, but did nevertheless flee to [Anglo-] Catholicism, seems to take on the heavy burden alone, that is, the spiritual *errance* and agony of the European intellectual class today. What is it that he has never ceased to seek all through his spiritual *errance*? It is an escape from excessive personality (“Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1917)<sup>341</sup> – his very first critical work) and a surrender to something stable like a rock (“The Rock” (1934)). Hence, he pronounced his standpoint as “a classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion” [*FLA* ix].

I do not mean to talk about Eliot in detail. I have only presented to you a

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<sup>340</sup> It may even be possible, though I am not ready to pursue that direction, to discuss this abrupt insertion of “European comparison” in terms of what Leo Strauss calls the “art of writing under persecution”, i.e., an *esoteric* way of conveying the true message without letting it censored.

<sup>341</sup> Ch’oe Chaesŏ is also misled by Eliot’s own (deliberate?) mistake in dating the 1919 essay as 1917 in the table of contents of *SE*.



most sensitive patient in order to show how European individualism has come out to be today.

Nevertheless, should the problem of those European intellectuals be solved, even if they were to recognize the maladies of individualism and convert to piety and loyalty? As the collection of essays, published just before the Second Great War in Europe broke out [presumably, *Essays Ancient and Modern* (1936)], shows, it seems that Eliot had already lost interest in both classicist literature and royalist politics, and was then pursuing Catholicism alone with all his heart and soul, so that he was apparently ruminating over the possibility of establishing the Catholic World Order. Should the current European turmoil ever subside by virtue of Catholicism? Or, more specifically, should Eliot's personal loyalty be satisfied? A clear answer will be brought forth by the current War.

(9-10; my translation [from Japanese])

Although Ch'oe Chaesŏ has earlier pronounced his ecstatic identification with the Japanese Emperor, his real sympathy – if not necessarily identification, certainly a sense of comradeship – obviously lies still with Eliot. In fact, his sympathy with Eliot here seems, oddly enough, stronger than ever. In the academico-critical phase of his career, Ch'oe Chaesŏ has evaluated the *literary theories* of T. E. Hulme, Irving Babbitt, I. A. Richards, and Herbert Read more highly than that of Eliot; in the *Inmun p'yŏngnon* phase, he has modeled himself, *practically* as well as idealistically, upon Eliot as the editor of the *Criterion*; and, at the moment of his *tenkō*, he has *appropriated* (or *mis/read*) Eliot's idea of "Tradition" into the logic of assimilation (thus, in effect, uncovering the *ideologeme* latent in Eliot). Now, at this final stage, his sympathy with Eliot is genuinely *theoretical*, in that they are both seeking, at least in Ch'oe Chaesŏ's understanding (which is indeed legitimate in my opinion), the "Kingdom of Spiritual Order" in the "immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is a contemporary history" (SP 177) by virtue of Theory. It is, as it were, a feeling of comradeship shared by the fated rivals – the World-Historical rivalry between the two competing Universalisms, the "Catholic World Order" vs. the Japanese "New World

Order". The "clear answer" to this rivalry should, as Ch'oe Chaesŏ was well aware, only be brought forth by the *deus ex machina*, the War. Both of these Universalisms, in a sense, failed in the face of the other, much more powerful pair of the competing Universalisms, namely, the U.S. Imperialism and the Soviet Imperialism. And yet, in another sense, both barely survived by way of complicity with the U.S. Imperialism – the former in the form of EU-NATO ideology and the latter in the form of the U.S.-Japan Alliance (under which Japanese economy, hand in hand with American military presence, was to rule East Asia, after all). Ch'oe Chaesŏ, like *his* Eliot, was indeed "a most sensitive patient" who embodied the fate of a universalistic Theory under the colonial condition, or perhaps under *Modernity* in general. That is to say, insofar as he was obsessed with Order as the last instance of his Theory (hence, no subversion by way of *creolization*, etc.), it was *logically* inevitable for him to reach the conclusion that he had actually reached, where there was only one *totalizing* (or *totalitarian*) existing Order, the Imperial Order, which "is constituted not by the abolition of circular segmentarity [e.g., an individual will to Order like Ch'oe Chaesŏ's], but instead by a concentricity of distinct circles, or the organization of a resonance among centers" (Deleuze & Guattari *Thousand* 211) – unless he were to find a way out of this existing Imperial Order.

*Unless*, indeed. Unless one firmly believed in the fall of the Empire – a belief rather hard to sustain after the fall of Paris and the "phenomenal success" in Pearl Harbor – and flung oneself into the "other side", there must have seemed to be no alternative. But here is Kim Saryan, who is, for Ch'oe Chaesŏ, a kind of Gerontion's imaginary *alter ego* – Kim Saryan did, as it were, everything Ch'oe Chaesŏ didn't ("I was neither at the hot gates / Nor fought in the warm rain . . ."). Kim Saryan, a legendary Leftist novelist, who had studied German literature at Tokyo Imperial University and become one of the most successful Korean writers in Japan (nominated for the most prestigious Akutagawa Prize in 1939), escaped into China and joined the militant resistance movement there. After the liberation,

he went north, fought in the Korean War on the North side, and was reportedly killed in action. Meanwhile, Ch'oe Chaesŏ, once ostracized but silently reinstated as a professor of English at a private university in Seoul, fled Seoul under siege to countryside, carrying with him only the *C.O.D.*, *Works of Shakespeare*, and *Onions' Glossary*. In the foreword to his English monograph, *Shakespeare's Art as Order of Life* (1965), Ch'oe Chaesŏ, now writing in authentic English under the Anglicized name "Jaisou Choe", dramatically recollects – almost as if he were *mimicking* Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis* – the background of his writing:

In Taegoo, my place of refuge, I began to read Shakespeare's plays, among which were many that I had read only once. With only a compendious glossary as aid, naturally I had to read closely and think intensively. I could find in my toil, however, an inexpressible joy and consolation that I had not tasted before. I felt life worth still living, and had great zest in those days of deprivation and disorder. I reaffirmed then the truth that literature is the organizing of experiences, the ordering of emotions and the realization of values. From then on, Shakespeare as well as Beethoven became part of my life. (*Shakespeare's* [i])

In his theoretical introduction, he draws heavily on A. C. Bradley – F. H. Bradley's brother, incidentally – whose "idea of moral order is an abiding contribution to Shakespearean criticism," in that it "not only explains exactly the effect of Shakespearean tragedy, but also provides a philosophical foundation for us to rest our whole study of Shakespeare" (17). With this in mind, Jaisou Choe explicates every single Shakespearean play in terms of "order" – never would one read, I believe, such an order-obsessed work of literary criticism. Order here does no longer belong to the Imperial House, but to Literature with a capital L, just as it has once belonged to the Intellect with a capital I or the Moral with a capital M. Only the names have changed – they dance round, to the rhythm of socio-politico-historical vicissitudes, but Order sits in the middle and rules.

Read, finally, the concluding passage of his rather excessively sympathetic reading of

*Coriolanus*:

Thus, Coriolanus is sacrificed to the combined monster of the mass and its leaders – the mass ignorant, cowardly, fickle but cruel, and a few leaders who never act except to agitate the mass out of envy and the consideration of their profits. The whole play would be utter nonsense if we did not presuppose a world of absolute value that transcends the superficial, shifting actuality – that is, a transcendental order. That Shakespeare has such an order in mind is revealed through the admiration with which the Volscian nobles and Aufidius himself mourn for the sacrificed hero at the end. (128)

As we know his past political engagement and its miserable consequences, we can easily see – despite his Eliotic fiat that “[a]s Mr. Eliot said, a proper criticism should be directed more towards the work itself than toward the writer’s personality” (15) – that Ch’oe Chaesŏ seems to have infused his own personal grudge against the ignorant mass and its leaders who never understand his vision of the “transcendental order”. And yet, “the sacrificed hero” to be mourned at the end of the day was not Ch’oe Chaesŏ, who was *theoretically* obsessed with Order through and through, but Kim Saryan, who fought guerrilla wars against the two successive Imperial Orders imposed on the Korean Peninsula, Japan and the U.S., and was killed *in action*.

## Conclusion

*The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,  
For the pattern is new in every moment  
And every moment is a new and shocking  
Valuation of all we have been. . . .*

--- T. S. Eliot, "East Coker"

In "Appendix B" Paul de Man added to the second edition of his *Blindness and Insight* (the latter of the two appendices, hence, technically, the final words *supplementing* the body of his first book), he surveys several contemporary essays in literary theory, finds "a self-defeating situation" of those theories of reading, and throws a question at the readers: "How are literary studies ever to get started when every proposed method seems based on a misreading and a misconceived preconception about the nature of literary language?" (*Blindness* 282) This study has started – allow me to quote from my own Introduction – by reflecting on "a complicated, overdetermined structure of reading – multiple plies of the actual-extensive 'mis/readings' as *effects* structurally determined by the virtual-intensive 'double reading' [i.e., 'the systematic reading' and 'the affective reading', enveloped in one another]" – a study, in other words, based on the very misreadability of each and every reading that allows a (symptomatic) reader to *read* the "double reading" latent in various textual events, including the marginalia that are, by definition, in the margins of a text while itself being a text in its own right. The main text that this thesis has worked on has indeed been the marginalia in Eliot's copy of Spinoza's *Opera*, or "T. S. Eliot reading Spinoza". Through our reading of Eliot's reading of

Spinoza, we have seen how Eliot *mis/reads* Spinoza's *Ethics* almost systematically so as to frame it to suit the generalizing Theory that constitutes his "academic philosophizing" (and, by extension, his more famous pieces of poetical theorizing) and, at the same time, how certain singular moments of the excessive "affective reading" abruptly erupt in the midst and disrupt the smooth flow of the "systematic reading" of Theory. These moments of the "affective reading" seem to have already crossed the frontiers of Theory, making the "intimate contact, at some point, with the disorder or the unknown order" (Blackmur), or Gerontion's "closer contact" with the Universal-*sive*-Virtual. And through those fissures and cracks that momentarily open the space for such "contacts", I dare maintain, does Poetry shine through, perhaps not in such a way that the light does but rather that the dark grows luminous. In the final chapter, then, we have examined the political *afterlives* of Eliot's Theory, that is to say, how Eliot's theory of "Tradition" is to be *mis/read* by himself, Nishida Kitarō, and Ch'oe Chaesō at diverse socio-historical conjunctures from diverse ideological positions of utterance – and yet, each conjuncture is more or less related to Empire, or Imperial Nation (*Meta-Oikos*), while each position is more or less characterized as *metoikos*, endowed potentially with the trans-formative moment (*meta-oikos*). Those *mis/readings* in the final chapter have, I hope, shed light (or luminous darkness) on those in the preceding chapters. One sees from this that the misreadability of reading should not be taken too lightly.<sup>342</sup>

Every mis/reading can thus be read as an actualization / differentiation – sometimes *new*, sometimes *shocking* – of the "double reading". That is to say: every reading can be a *critical* misreading, resisting Theory; just as every moment can be a *critical* moment, resisting History. Hence, there are always two readings, enveloped in one another: "the systematic reading" that "imposes a pattern" (generalizing Theory, Philosophy, Politics,

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<sup>342</sup> Our task (*Aufgabe*) has been, in short, joyously to measure the *potentialities* of misreadability, rather than patiently "to fulfill the 'impossible' task of reading unreadability" (Miller *Ethics* 59).

History) and “the affective reading” that “falsifies” (resistance to Theory, Ethics, Poetry, Nature). In this context, it is of great interest that in the above-discussed letter to Mary Hutchinson (11? July 1919) – the “metic” letter – Eliot brings up a discussion of “two ways” of *reading* and “two kinds of intelligence”:

It seems that one ought to *read* in two ways: 1) because of particular and personal interest, which makes the thing one’s own, regardless of what other people think of the book 2) *to a certain extent*, because it is something one ‘ought to have read’ but one must be quite clear that this is *why* one is reading. Although my education is very fragmentary I believe I shall do more of this.

Also, as I said once, I think there are two kinds of intelligence: the intellectual and the sensitive – the first can read a great deal because it schematises and theorises – the second not much, because it requires to get more out of a book than can immediately be put into words. (*LI* 378-9; Eliot’s italics)

One is a *general* way of reading by the “intellectual” kind of intelligence (“it schematises and theorises”); the other is a *singular* way of reading by the “sensitive” kind of intelligence (“particular and personal”). There are always two *readings* that constitute one *ethology* of reading that is Eliot’s – Philosophy vs. Poetry; History vs. Nature; Hegel vs. Spinoza; Reality-as-Order(ed) vs. “images of the deep anarchies”<sup>343</sup>; the generalizing tendencies of Theory vs. the “intimate contact” or “closer contact” with the Virtual Whole; “Notes” to *The Waste Land* vs. “Gerontion” as its prelude; rhetorical *strategy* vs. topical *ethos*; the (re)solution vs. the problem; the *molar* vs. the *molecular*; and, finally,

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<sup>343</sup> Although R. P. Blackmur’s amazing insight into “images of the deep anarchies out of which the order of the state must be remade if that order is to be vital” concerns the modernist artists in general whose incentive “should have remained fixed on that living relation between anarchy and order”, it seems particularly pertinent to Eliot’s *ethology* of reading, in that Eliot’s is, I believe, “Tory anarchy” *per excellence*: “The true anarchy of spirit should always show (or always *has* showed) a tory flavor. It is the artist above all who *realizes* that revolutions – however fresh, violent and destructive – have always *already* taken place; as private murder represents a relation already at crisis or already sundered. Revolution and murder are only the gross cost, assessed too late: the usury of dead institutions” (*Primer* 13).

*Meta-Oikos* vs. *meta-oikos* – in sum, “the systematic reading” on the Particular-General Axis vs. “the affective reading” on the Singular-Universal Axis. These two readings are not binary or complementary. The former dominates the text, while being abruptly interrupted or *resisted* here and there on its apparently smooth surface by the latter, which emerges as an effect of the absent *exteriority*, as a lack or a fissure – in short, as a *symptom*. These two currents – or, rather, the major current and the minor, submerged (or *virtual*) undercurrent – flow into “Tradition and the Individual Talent” in the form of con-formative *Meta-Oikos* vs. trans-formative *meta-oikos*, destined to be disseminated and appropriated (i.e., uncannily *mis/read*), due to its great success in the emergent global market of literary criticism, beyond time and space. Such a global success, dogged by uncanny appropriations, may be interpreted as a *translatio* of Eliot’s Virgilian ideal of *imperium sine fine* as well as his “colonial fate”.

If there are always two sides, then, where does the *meta-oikos* moment in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” lie – not in terms of its disseminations but in itself? In the previous chapter, we have almost exclusively focused on the *Meta-Oikos* side of this seminal essay for the sake of a general(izing) argument – which may ironically reveal our own obsession with Theory – with regard to the political consequences of the latent *ideologeme*, in order, as it were, to merely criticize the original sin, rather than attempting to rescue any *other* moment that must also be latent in the same essay. Now, in place of conclusion, or in *resistance* to the generalizing conclusion, we ask the question: Where does the latent *meta-oikos* moment lie in the apparently *Meta-Oikos* Theory of “Tradition”? To put it in another way: Where can we find the potentially *new and shocking* mis/reading in Eliot’s own reading of “Tradition”?

Before directly addressing this question, it should be worth taking a detour, or *un retour*, to the originary Eliot yet again. The 21-page “Paper for Course in Philosophy [Ethics]” (TS Houghton) is no doubt written at Merton and coterminous with the significant



letter to Norbert Wiener (Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> 1915), as there are various correspondences between these two texts (such as the reference to uses of relativism and naturalism, and the view of philosophy as literary criticism and conversation), as well as the mention of “my friend Dr Wiener” in the paper.<sup>344</sup> In this paper, Eliot deals with the problematic relation between the ethical value-judgment and feelings, and presents his thesis that “any system of values is built up on feelings, ~~and that feeling is the ultimate criterion~~, and that as our feeling changes, so will that which is valuable always be something else” (4), which is, in a sense, another variation of (the generalizing) Theory vs. (the somatic) resistance to Theory. Thus Eliot, quite naturally, navigates between Scylla and Charybdis again:

That a value judgment is often arrived at because it is seen to cohere with some system of values already accepted is a fact which I am not anxious to deny, because the denial would deny the possibility of any education of taste or morals; but I do maintain that the system must end in feeling, and that it began in feeling. In this instance the feeling was due to a theory, but the theory itself was dependent upon sense for its data. (8; Eliot’s underline)

Or, in another place near the conclusion:

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<sup>344</sup> “To reduce the world to a set of formulae is to let it slip through our fingers in a fine dust; but to fly into an emotional orgy or retire inot [*sic.*] a sunlit stupor is to let the world slip through our fingers in a thin smoke. Between the two extreme is found the subject-matter of conversation, upon which intelligence feeds. Philosophy, as I ~~understand~~ apprehend it, is a hybrid compound of the three, science, orgy, and conversation; though I fear that we are apt to overlook the third in the violence of our rushes from pole to pole. Much of idealism, which is the philosophy of the historically minded, consists in an attempt to take the delicate and evasive truths of historical and literary criticism, truths which are the intuitive apprehension of a trained mind and a trained taste, and dragoon them into the goose-step of dialectic; while on the other hand, the more tough-minded philosopher sometimes presents the aspect of an elderly German mathematician learning to dance. But there are all sorts of ways of setting the world in order; from the relative precision of physics to the relative confusion of theology; and if as I concede to idealism, each science manufactures its own objects, yet metaphysics is at liberty to manufacture its own objects too. As a relativist (to use ~~my friend~~ Dr Wiener’s word) I am not in a position even to desire to refute anybody; all that I have the desire and the right to attempt, is to indicate what seems to me the sensible, or honnete view” (“Ethics” 2). Cf. “For *me*, as for Santayana, philosophy is chiefly literary criticism and conversation about life” (Letter to Wiener; *LI* 88).

History is largely a mere chronicle without meaning; and facts in the long run overpower theory; though without the theory, or without incipient theories, we could hardly say that there are even facts; and certainly facts which were impotent of generating theory would be completely irrelevant to our lives.

(19; Eliot's underline)

We should not reiterate the discussion over this chicken-and-egg question concerning “the theory” and “facts” (or “feelings”), but, at this stage, Eliot seems more inclined to “facts” and “feelings”, more innocent, than his more Theory-oriented doctoral dissertation. Towards the end of the paper, Eliot even “call[s] up once more the ghost of materialism, which [added in pencil: as it seemed in Oxford] had lain so long and so flat” and states, “I am not unwilling, with mental reservations, to give it my political support”, concluding: “Our lives cannot be wholly coherent; our values cannot be wholly commensurate. And while there is transcendence, there is also mere alteration. But for spirit the escape from the struggle against matter would be death” (20-21).

What is most pertinent to our argument is that Eliot, during the course of this navigation, makes an apologetic mention of Hegelianism: “as you may have suspected at moments that the writer of this paper ~~was~~ is himself an Hegelian, I should like to dwell for a paragraph upon my motives for rejecting this philosophy” (17). Eliot then begins the paragraph by stating that “[i]t is obvious that the Hegelian form of relativism is not altogether without legitimate foundation”, explicating the organicist, expansionist character of Hegelian “idea that any judgment of value or of truth is the germ of a complete organic growth, a germ which at once demands its own expansion” (*ibid.*). “But”, Eliot asks, “what if this should be only an audacious claim, and if there should be some strange power capable of resistance to the omnivorousness of mind?” (18) Indeed, Eliot *feels* “some strange power capable of resistance” to Theory, his own Theory of “Tradition” as “History” that demands nothing less than the omnivorous, expansionist “mind of Europe” – omnivorous as to anything European, or anything *essentially akin* to European-ness, while

being very picky as to anything non-European, or “foreign forces” within or without. It is then of great significance that, right in the middle of the whole paper, such an anti-Hegelian, anti-Theory moment is dramatically illustrated, quite characteristically of Eliot the Poet (or Eliot the Mystic), by his own *singular* and *inexplicable* experience of a “thrill” at the sight of a “really new” work of art:

We can trace the origin and development of the moral ideas. It is the business of descriptive ethics to follow the slow expansion of primitive desires in the various systems of values . . . It can show too the causes for the assertion of particular virtues and vices at particular times . . . It can show the gradual approximation to an identical morality for all men. But it cannot explain the meaning of the sort of thrill which I have at the sight of a new and satisfying work of art, or a perfect response to a new moral situation; and this thrill is the intrinsic value. The next moment may show that I was wrong; time, which as the Hindoo sage observes, is hard to beat, may reconstruct every value; but at the moment and for that consciousness, the value was there, and remains inexplicable. (10-11)

This singular, momentary, inexplicable “thrill” is, indeed, a prime example of “some strange power capable of resistance” to Theory, the dangerous *potentia* of trans-formative, trans-valuational *meta-oikos* (“may reconstruct every value”). To probe for this moment of *meta-oikos*, submerged by the Theory of *Meta-Oikos*, in “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, we must finally turn to the last of its pre-texts, which we have left unread until this moment.

“Reflections on Contemporary Poetry [IV]” (*Egoist*, July 1919) immediately precedes “Tradition and the Individual Talent [I]” on the pages of *The Egoist*. It is also the fourth and final installment of the series after a nearly-2-year interval – or, indeed, a “break” with his earlier contributions to *The Egoist*, which have been more of a destructive criticism “with some acerbity and hilarity”. As Eliot began working with J. M. Murry in the *Athenaeum*, his critical writings became more constructive, obviously with the plan of

collected essays in mind. It is, then, no surprise that this fourth installment is not so much a follow-up of the preceding three installments, as a precursor for the immediately following “Tradition” essay. In fact, it begins with a long reflection on the relations between a living poet and the dead and on how we may “become bearers of a tradition”. In that respect, it is fair to say that its main purport is exactly the same as the ensuing, far more famous essay. However, this minor one has a distinct tone, or *ethos*, of its own – personal and passionate, even erotic and necrophilic:

This relation is a feeling of profound kinship, or rather of a peculiar personal intimacy, with another, probably a dead author. It may overcome us suddenly, on first or after long acquaintance; it is certainly a crisis; and when a young writer is seized with his first passion of this sort he may be changed, metamorphosed almost, within a few weeks even from a bundle of second-hand sentiments into a person. The imperative intimacy arouses for the first time a real, an unshakeable confidence. That you possess this secret knowledge, this intimacy, with the dead man, that after few or many years or centuries you should have appeared, with this indubitable claim to distinction; who can penetrate at once the thick and dusty circumlocutions about his reputation, can call yourself alone his friend: it is something more than *encouragement* to you. It is a cause of development, like personal relations in life. Like personal intimacies in life, it may and probably will pass, but it will be ineffaceable. (“Reflections [IV]” 39; Eliot’s italics)

This passage shows no trace of Hegelianism, but instead, there is a distinctly occult flavor in it<sup>345</sup> – one may well expect to read a sentence like “you possess this secret knowledge,

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<sup>345</sup> Although, apparently, he is not aware of “Reflections [IV]” as a run-up to “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, Leon Surette, in his stimulating study of Modernism and the occult, points out some occult elements in this seminal essay on Tradition: “Eliot was just as committed to the idea of a universal culture as Pound and the occult were. He even used the term favoured by the occult – ‘tradition’ – in his early essays, trying to catch the idea of an unofficial or alternate culture which was central to occult theories” (*Birth* 249). As for the critical, subversive, and trans-formative moment of occultism in modernity, see Viswanathan’s *Outside the Fold* and “The Ordinary Business of Occultism” among others.

this intimacy, with the dead man” in Mme. Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). Just as “the otherworldliness of the occult offered alternative possibilities for imagining colonial relations outside a hierarchical framework” (Viswanathan “Ordinary” 2), so is the above passage full of *trans-formative* (*meta-oikos*) moments – “he may be changed, metamorphosed almost”. The “feeling of profound kinship” is, unlike the assimilationist “essential kinship”, emphatically *singular* (“a peculiar personal intimacy”), and *critical* in the true sense of the word (“it is certainly a crisis”). And when Eliot says, “Like personal intimacies in life, it may and probably will pass, but it will be ineffaceable”, we may legitimately presume that it is indeed true of what Eliot later calls “temporary submission to [Spinoza’s] influence” or “a temporary conversion to Bergsonism” (See Chapter Two). Eliot’s reading of Spinoza and/or Bergson must have been a moment of “crisis”, and will, much like trauma, stay “ineffaceable” – i.e., the *presence as a necessary absence*.

This is the time of trauma, the Unconscious, the *Other* order. Indeed, Blackmur’s ingenious insight rings true: “[Eliot] knows that no order remains vital which has lost its intimate contact, at some point, with the disorder or the unknown order which gave it rise” (*Lion* 163). This is the time in the “contact zone” – “How should I use them for your closer contact?” (“Gerontion”). The time in this passage is far from the mighty stream of the progressive, expansionist “History”, but the abrupt moment (*Augenblick*) of crisis, like a magmatic eruption or a flash of lightning, that “may overcome us suddenly”. It should be worth *comparing* it with the “moment of danger” in Walter Benjamin’s Thesis “On the Concept of History”, which is indeed *antithesis* to Hegelian Historicism. Here is the Thesis VI:

Articulating the past historically does not mean recognizing it “the way it really was.” It means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger [im Augenblick einer Gefahr]. The danger threatens both the content of the tradition and those who inherit it. For both, it is one and the same thing: the danger of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. Every age must strive anew to

wrest tradition away from the conformism that is working to overpower it. The Messiah comes not only as the redeemer; he comes as the victor over the Antichrist. The only historian capable of fanning the spark of hope in the past is the one who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he is victorious. And this enemy has never ceased to be victorious.

(Benjamin *Selected IV* 391; Benjamin's italics)

Eliot's idea of "Tradition" may indeed be characterized as "the conformism that is working to overpower [tradition]", when it is viewed through the looking glass of "History", or the Hegelian "Mind", described in "Was There a Scottish Literature?". However, if viewed from the *singular* perspective of "a peculiar personal intimacy", the alleged "conformism" to *Meta-Oikos* cannot help conceiving a potentially *trans-formative* (*meta-oikos*) "moment of danger" and/or of "hope", every time it assimilates a new – "really new" – subject. Once you possess "this secret knowledge", the "tradition" is no longer simply shared among those who are "cognate enough" or "essentially akin", being always-already there to "obtain . . . by great labour" (this *metic* metaphor is, after all, that of a *natural* birth), but rather an occult knowledge shared among "friends" of "the society", where we are "changed" and "quickened" to become "bearers of a tradition" (the metaphor here is, in turn, that of *initiation*, a ritualistic re-birth) – no longer being a born member of the existing whole, but what is involved here is *becoming-bearer* of the Virtual Whole:

our friendship [with the dead] gives us an introduction to the society in which our friend moved; we learn its origins and its endings; we are broadened. We do not imitate, we are changed; and our work is the work of the changed man; we have not borrowed, we have been quickened, and we become bearers of a tradition.

("Reflections [IV]" 39)

This secret "society" is not regulated by any generality, such as Nation or Race, but by the universal "friendship" (or, rather, *brotherhood*). This "secret knowledge" is acquired, by

definition, only through a *singular* experience of, or contact with, the Universal. We do not cite the great Masters of the past as “a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (Eliot “Ulysses, Order and Myth”; *SP* 177), but as a way of “blast[ing]” now-time [Jetztzeit] “out of the continuum of history” (Benjamin “Thesis” XIV; *Selected IV* 395). Citation is not a trick of “manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity”, but “the tiger’s leap into the past [der Tigersprung ins Vergangene]” (*ibid.*). Where there is a Tiresias “see[ing] the substance” and “uniting all the rest”, there is always a Gerontion *resisting* any kind of conformism, *problematizing* every thing and every event, and *never reaching* any general conclusion:

The tiger springs in the new year. Us he devours. Think at last  
We have not reached conclusion, when I  
Stiffen in a rented house. Think at last  
I have not made this show purposelessly  
(“Gerontion” ll. 48-51; *CP* 40)

So, after all, we have not reached conclusion, but when we think of it at last, we have, in a sense, reached *resistance* to conclusion. Let us, then, think at last that we have not made this show purposelessly.

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